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FIFTY YEARS ON

In its issue of February 28, 1935, the TLS carried the following review of *Self-Subsistence* for the Unemployed by J. W. Scott:

The name of Professor Scott is associated with the experiments near Cheltenham which he has fathered for a number of years under the title of homecrofting. He began originally with a scheme for taking urban workers out of the towns and settling them on plots of land within reach of their regular work, so that their spare-time hours could be spent in cultivating half an acre apiece and they could thus improve their standard of living and buttress themselves against helplessness if their ordinary employment failed.

The application of machinery to production is not constantly rendering more and more of the population surplus, and, accordingly, the

Ministry of Labour figures disprove it. Professor Scott in his heart probably does not believe it, but he frequently writes as if he did. However that may be, there can arise no quarrel with him on his main premises, that we have thousands of industrial workers surplus to production at the moment; nor on his secondary one that in any less rigid society their natural resort would be to self-support on the land.

His idea is for the unemployed to work the land with the hope of supplying food not to other people but to themselves. After all, this is nothing but an organized extension of the universally approved allotment movement. It is a system of allotments grouped so that division of labour can be practised in a rudimentary form. Professor Scott's unique

obvious line of development is his laying bare of the unperceived reason why group self-support in a modern community has hardly made any progress hitherto. The truth is that it requires a private currency, a secret to which he unearthed the key from the writings of a nineteenth-century Ulsterman named C. B. Philipson. The attack on the gold standard which fills the later chapters, besides being more germane to Philipsonism than to self-subsistence, does less than justice to the importance of keeping the pound sterling more or less stable not only in relation to wheat but also in terms of other countries' currencies. These fables ought not to obscure the fact that homecrofting stripped of its non-essentials can yield up elements of real truth, exceptionally

The vanguard of a failed revolt

Kenneth O. Morgan

DAVID J. V. JONES
The Last Rising: The Newport Insurrection of 1839
273pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £12.50.
0194200765

On the morning of November 4, 1839, about seven thousand men, mostly miners though including some ironworkers, marched down the main street of Newport, Monmouthshire, loaded guns, swords and pikes at the ready. Their leaders were a picturesque trio - William Jones, travelling actor and watchmaker; Zephaniah Williams, mineral agent and infidel innkeeper, proprietor of the Royal Oak, Blaenau; and the celebrated Newport radical, the tailor and draper, John Frost. Their immediate objective was the release of the Chartist orator, Henry Vincent, from Newport gaol. More fundamentally, they were bent on launching a mass uprising and creating a people's republic, that would set the Welsh valleys and perhaps the whole of Britain ablaze. When they reached the Westgate hotel in the centre of the town, men of the 45th infantry regiment concealed there opened fire, with horrendous effect. A fearful battle raged for the next twenty-five minutes. An eye-witness testified to 'the scene, dreadful beyond expression - the groans of the dying - the shrieks of the wounded, pallid, ghostly countenances and the blood-shot eyes of the dead... passages ankle-deep in gore...'. At the end of it, at least twenty-two of the Chartist marchers were dead, with scores of others wounded, many severely. The British authorities, in one bloody half-hour, had inflicted more casualties on the civilian population than at any other time in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Even Peterloo itself had been surpassed by the carnage of Newport. The aftermath included stern retribution upon the local population, with over 250 arraigned in a mass treason trial. Jones, Williams and Frost were captured and sentenced to death, but at the last moment were reprieved and instead transported to Australia. Jones and Williams died there, but John Frost returned to Wales years later in 1856, to die in 1877 at the age of ninety-two. From that time onwards, all three were hallowed as martyrs for democratic liberties and social justice.

This dramatic uprising - the last genuine workers' insurrection in British history to date - has long captured the popular imagination. It has generated a rich variety of later assessments from the 1850s to the 1960s, many of them quizzical or disapproving of this violent episode. Radicals or Marxists often viewed it as simply a plot by agents provocateurs acting for the Whig government. In 1939, the late David Williams, one of the great Welsh historians of this or any other century, wrote a superb centenary study of John Frost himself. But not until now has there been a satisfactory total reassessment of the origins, dynamics and consequences of the Chartist rising in Monmouthshire that met its bloody finale outside the Westgate hotel (still commemorated in the pockmarked portico of that building). This reassessment has now been provided by David J. V. Jones in a superb book which will surely prove to be the definitive study. Building upon his earlier work on popular disturbances in South Wales, published in the *Welsh History Review* and elsewhere, and on his wide-ranging knowledge of British Chartist, David Jones simply transforms the quality of our understanding. Implicit (and sometimes explicit) in his account is a basic recasting of the findings of David Williams, his old mentor. In *John Frost*, Professor Williams cast grave doubt on the revolutionary credentials of the Monmouthshire Chartists in general and of John Frost in particular. A rationalist himself, he disputed whether his hero could have intended any kind of insurrection. The Newport "riot" he considered to be no more than a monster demonstration, to no purpose in particular. But David Jones, by contrast, emphasizes throughout that the aims of the Chartist marchers, obscure though they often were, were directed to launching a mass rising in south-east Wales, probably linking up with similar Chartist groups in various parts of England. It was an overt exercise in direct action, with Newport gaol as the winter palace. Indeed, given the fractured society of the coalfield, it could hardly have been anything else. From these pages, the Monmouthshire Chartists emerge as the vanguard of a failed revolt by the working class in its formative, frontier phase. As a result, the Newport march appears all the more traumatic and significant.

Much of the value of the book lies in its brilliant analysis of the socio-economic structure of the coalfield, and of its distinctive political traditions. Chartistism emerged from an exploding, expanding society thrown up around the ironworks and coal mines at the heads of the valleys of south-east Wales. It was a community from the start strictly demarcated on class lines: industrial magnates like Homfray

or Crawshaw Bailey at the head of the social pyramid; a sprinkling of managers and agents further down; and a vast, raw mining workforce at the base, albeit divided within itself between craftsmen and the unskilled. The capacity for self-help and self-reliance among such a working population was remarkable, as the chapels and Sunday schools, friendly societies and beerhouses bore various witness. Here was apparently a law-abiding, self-improving people. But it was always liable to erupt into overt class conflict, as in the fierce "Scotch Cattle" riots against the truck system in the early 1830s. From the "black domain" of the Scotch Cattle, with their pre-industrial ritual and imagery, Welsh Chartistism was to emerge.

In addition to its social distinctiveness and strongly Welsh cultural awareness, this popular movement had its own sophisticated ideology and clearly defined political objectives. Through men like Frost, the pre-industrial artisanate radicalism of South Wales was translated into the assumptions and rhetoric of a class-based industrial society. Jones carefully links the various Chartist clubs and movements of 1839 to a range of Working-men's Associations, proclaiming a new political gospel, over several years past. In conjunction with wider studies of Chartistism in recent years, by Gareth Stedman Jones and Dorothy Thompson in particular, his book re-establishes the centrality of authentic politics and political ideas in a movement too long dismissed as an inchoate social protest by the hungry and disinherited, or by the hapless victims of technological change. In South Wales, Chartistism was the programme of an intelligent, sophisticated cadre of leaders, drawn from the most advanced technology based on coal and steam. It made the eventual uprising all the more challenging.

The progress of South Wales Chartistism in early 1839 was extraordinary. It was whipped up by the fiery oratory of Henry Vincent - "When the time for resistance comes, let your cry be 'To your tents, O Israel', and then with one heart, one voice and one blow perish the privileged orders! Death to the aristocracy!" After Vincent was arrested, an immediate insurrection was narrowly averted, in part as a result of Frost's commanding presence and prestige. But, from now on, a co-ordinated national uprising was the objective. Chartistism, in disarray in England and Scotland after the break-up of the People's Convention in Birmingham in the summer was vibrant and alive in South Wales. With an organization and secrecy that still appear extraordinary, a strategy for

revolution was worked out. The very way in which the march to Newport was planned, starting at various mining communities at the heads of the valleys, with numerous diversionary tactics planned along the route for separate Chartist offshoots at Pontypool and elsewhere, testifies to the seriousness of the marchers' purpose. The vindictive response of the authorities, towards friendly innkeepers and other Chartist sympathizers, added to the fervour, and to the relentless logic of what followed at Newport. Even after the dispersal of the march and the crushing of individual Chartist resistance, other Chartist outbreaks were actively planned, with the military centres of Brecon and Abergavenny and the town of Cardiff itself targets for further assaults. The sentencing of Jones, Williams and Frost gave further impetus to South Wales Chartistism and it remained vigorous throughout the 1840s. One of its colourful leaders, "Jack the Fifer", migrated to America and returned to Texas, for whose independence he had previously fought. When elected for Merthyr in 1868, the pacifist, Henry Richard, retrospectively condemned the Chartist violence of twenty years earlier. The Welsh, he declared, now viewed it with "undisguised repugnance and horror". Yet his election platforms were graced by self-confessed former Chartists. The later ascendancy of nonconformist Liberalism in Wales no doubt owed more to Methodism than to O'Connor, let alone Marx. But the Chartist tradition was at least one continuing inspiration.

This splendid, humane book makes us reflect anew, both on Chartistism more generally and on Welsh radicalism in particular. For British Chartistism, the conclusion must be that the classic distinction between "physical" and "moral force" Chartistism is still further undermined. The Newport march was part of a decisive theme running throughout Chartistism as a whole. Feargus O'Connor became closely involved with events in South Wales: "the cause of Frost is the cause of the whole nation". For Welsh historians, however, the conclusions to be drawn from Jones's detailed local study may be less certain. For two decades now, the received picture has been of a powerful Welsh radical "Jacobin" tradition suddenly cast aside. Historians have depicted a dynamic quasi-nationalist ideology being forged in the early 1800s and exploding into revolutionary action in Merthyr in 1831. By contrast, work on the 1850s and 1860s sees the Welsh workers cast in the mould of moderate, reformist noncon-

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John Bayley, *The London Review of Books*

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A star striker

Donald Macintyre

MICHAEL CRICK
Scargill and the Miners
160pp. Penguin. Paperback, £2.50.
0140523553

formist radicalism, all revolutionary passion spent. The South Wales of Dic Penderyn in 1831 and of Henry Richard in 1868 seem almost two different worlds. This abrupt collapse of a revolutionary tradition has been explained in terms of a collective "loss of memory", a great silence descending some time in the 1840s. David Jones's underlying argument is a little hard to locate in this continuing dialogue. After all, the Newport rising and its aftermath took place in the very heart of this historic caesura – if, indeed, there was one. Jones makes no reference at all to pre-1830 radical traditions. Even the 1831 Merthyr rising is only briefly linked with these events in Gwent to the south and east. The Chartist eruption in Llanidloes in rural Montgomeryshire (David Jones's native county) is ignored. On the other hand, nor is Jones's study easy to relate to the picture of mid-Victorian respectability and self-help. He cites the growing economic prosperity of the 1850s as marking a change, but this does not seem a complete explanation. It may well be that he felt it unnecessary to link his study explicitly to these alternative scenarios for the previous and subsequent periods. Implicitly, his work seems to challenge, or at least to modify, both.

It is notable that Merthyr Tydfil has always been the paradigm example in each case. Maybe we have all got it a shade wrong, and have been unduly seduced by Merthyr, "matrix and crucible", cradle of radicals and Welsh historians? Maybe we ought to have been looking more closely at the Frost-Bevan-Kinnock territory further east, all the time? Certainly, the rising of the Monmouthshire Chartists will now be understood with new subtlety and depth. But the essence of Welsh popular radicalism, its roots, periodicity and quality, all those values which still lend passion and pride to striking miners in 1985 (or plain cussedness, as seen by their opponents), remain in key respects still obscure. Almost a century and a half after these brave men were gunned down at Newport, their legacy remains as mysterious and beguiling as ever. The debate among Welsh historians, therefore, goes on.

The Valleys, edited by John Davies and Mike Jenkins and published by Poetry Wales Press (141pp. £5.95, 0907476287) is an anthology of poetry and prose from the industrial valleys of South Wales – in the main in and around Glamorgan and Gwent. Among the poems included are Alun Lewis's "The Mountain Over Aberdare", Vernon Watkins's "The Collier", Tom Bailey's "Rebel's Progress", Harri Webb's "Local Boy Makes Good" and excerpts from Idris Davies's "Gwalla Deserta"; among the authors of prose pieces are Alun Richards, John L. Hughes, Gwyn Thomas, Gwyn Jones and Glyn Jones.

There is something paradoxical about Arthur Scargill's reverence for A. J. Cook, the leader of the 1926 miners' strike. Scargill told an interviewer in 1979 that Cook was the "greatest leader the miners ever produced". Yet the 1926 strike, which Cook had entered as a passionate syndicalist, ended in a tragic defeat. Although Cook had sued for peace relatively early, he was forced to bear much of the blame for the failure by himself. Although subsequently he was to lead the campaign within the TUC against Mondism in the late 1920s, he had moved nevertheless appreciably to the right before his death (at forty-seven, only five years after the strike ended). Michael Crick is aware of the resonances of 1926 but he does not labour them. Instead he has set out to provide an interim account of the 1984 strike and of the man who has already outstripped his own idol in militancy and stamina.

One quality certainly characteristic of both Cook and Scargill is personal magnetism. Crick writes, accurately enough, that to the young men on the miners' picket lines Arthur Scargill "is like a pop star". There are times when the author seems a little star-struck himself. Of Scargill's sometimes abrasive treatment of his own staff, we learn that the NUM president "rightly sees himself as the boss and so expects people to do precisely what he asks them to", and that "perhaps understandably" he gets very annoyed when they don't; that "like most people of high dynamism, determination and competence" Scargill finds it difficult to play second fiddle; that he is "one of the most able leaders a trade union has ever had, a man of outstanding qualities"; and that "privately" Scargill "probably" dislikes much of the violence but public condemnation would have been a betrayal of the pickets.

These indulgences are irritating, but they do not disguise the fact that this is a lucid and skilfully constructed introduction to the subject. It breaks little new ground, but Crick has judiciously sifted the available material, including the cuttings and television transcripts. His account of Scargill's ascendancy in the late 1960s succeeds in bringing to life the material unearthed by Andrew Taylor in his recent *Politics of the Yorkshire Miners* (reviewed in the *TLS* on October 12, 1984). As a reporter on Scargill's favourite television news outlet (Channel 4), he has understood most of what he has seen and heard. Any book as accessible as this one, which does not treat Scargill as the



Working miners leaving Cresswell Colliery under the protection of a policeman during the General Strike of 1926.

two dimensional bogeyman beloved by much of the press, is to be welcomed. Crick lays out before the ordinary reader most of the evidence needed to form his own judgment of the man.

Crick himself refrains from pursuing many of the questions his own researches have thrown up. He says in his concluding chapter (almost in passing) that it was "tactically foolish" not to hold a national ballot on the strike. He points out that the opinion polls at the time suggested that, had the NUM done so it would have got a pro-strike majority. Yet in the whole chapter devoted to the crucial weeks between mid-March and mid-April, it is mainly the (by now) well-known procedural manoeuvre to which Scargill resorted at the April 12 executive meeting to block the proposal for a ballot, that occupies the author's attention. He does not address the more absorbing question of why Scargill and the Left continued to oppose a ballot at this stage. Crick cites the argument that one man should not be allowed to vote another out of his job – but that was a justification, not a reason. Certainly, the militant young miners who thronged the square outside the Sheffield City Hall during the April 19 special conference would have detected the

whiff of sell-out in any move to have a ballot. But the reasons almost certainly went deeper than that. The industry was already in more ferment than it had ever been in the past decade as a result of the overtime ban that had frayed tempers in nearly every coalfield. The Left on the executive had succeeded in commanding a majority for the first – and conceivably the last – time in the union's history. The March 6 closure programme was to provide a *cassus belli* for a national strike. If ever the union was going to fight pit closures, so the argument ran, the time was now. The conditions might never come again for such a struggle. If the ballot did go against a strike, the game would be up.

If that was the reasoning on the Left against taking the gamble of a ballot, then it was controversial even on tactical grounds. Some of these arguments could have been deployed in favour of the opposite course of action. Crick challenges the *post hoc* justification that the Nottinghamshire miners might not have come out even if there had been a pro-strike majority, pointing out that they had loyally continued with the overtime ban, but he does the subject scant justice otherwise. He refers in passing to Jimmy Reid's argument that the refusal to hold a ballot shows Scargill's "contempt" for democracy and adds: "Yet it is difficult to say that Scargill is totally contemptuous of democracy when he believes so fervently in proportional representation and in the need to campaign to change people's attitudes." There may be telling arguments against Reid's criticism, but Scargill's interest in PR for parliamentary elections is not one of them.

Neither the mining communities, nor the local forces separate from Scargillism (for example, in South Wales) which have sustained the strike as a fight against unemployment feature much in this book. And Crick does not deal with criticism on the Left of certain elements of Scargill's strategy such as his near-obsession with the steel industry, and with the weapon of mass picketing as a means of closing it down, which many of his critics believe to be ten years out of date. But these may be understandable faults in a book written at great speed without the benefit of hindsight. Judged by those standards it hits the mark more often than might be expected. The book conveys Scargill's drive, as well as his massive grasp of detail; along with his unflagging energy that startled even ministers who had long prepared for the strike. Crick prophesies that Scargill is "unlikely to suffer the same fate as Cook" once the strike is over. But he sensibly avoids speculation on the subsequent reverberations throughout the labour movement. Crick has done a good job within the limitations, but this is far from being the definitive work on either the strike or the exasperating and formidable man who has led it.

The Drowned

It is true that the drowned return to us. In the blue eyes of children we see them, in a slight eccentricity of gait.

They spring actively out of the water, seeming smaller than they were, bearing large smiles, corn-coloured crowns.

Where the rocks are and the crabs manipulate their bodies like toy tanks in waters green and teeming like soup

they arise clear-winged, articulating sons and grandsons of themselves, stumpy authentic chimes,

echoes, reflections, shadowy waves that speak through the new waves underwritings, palimpsests

a ghost literature behind another one, carbons that have faint imprints on them, blue veils of a fresh breeze

IAN CRICHTON SMITH

The orchard and the swamp

Alan Ryan

KENNETH MINOGUE
Allen Powers
255p. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £16.95.
0297784269

Kenneth Minogue is an engaging figure; he combines antipodean boisterousness and good humour with metropolitan sophistication, and his hostility to all forms of fanaticism is patently as much temperamental as intellectual. If he has plenty of enemies on the Left, this is not because he is one of the cold-eyed commissars of the Right, but because he just can't get himself to feel that the world he lives in is as bad as the Left thinks it is, let alone bring his intellect to swallow the Left's recipes for improvement. He hears the preachers crying "Woe unto Jerusalem", but as for feeling particularly woestruck, cheerfulness will keep breaking in.

One aspect of this is that some of the best bits of *Allen Powers* are the bits where he simply holds up his opponents to ridicule – or, more exactly, where he allows them to hold themselves up to ridicule. Consider the following extract from Bertil Ollman's *Alienation*:

In every area of life man remains an object of manipulation by others and by his own products. As a consumer he is told when, where and how to use it. . . . Fetishism runs rampant. People do not recognise their laws, constitutions, queens, gods, customs, moral codes, academic prizes etc., as their creations. . . . The ultimate degradation, vicious living through the royal family, movie stars, football players and assorted Beatles, has never been so widespread.

However sympathetic one may be to Marx's own account of alienation and the assorted miseries he laid at the door of capitalism, it is surely impossible to take seriously a man who thinks that swooning over the Beatles or Princess Di is "the ultimate degradation". In the same world as the Gulag Archipelago and Auschwitz?

Professor Minogue is obviously up to something more elaborate than writing a set of footnotes to Peter Simple, but it is not at all clear what; nor is it clear that Minogue himself knows quite what he is up to. It is not altogether his fault; the territory he is exploring unites the quality of tropical swamp and tropical orchard – there is a tremendous variety of succulent concepts and theories to tempt the philosophical imagination, but the ground underfoot is decidedly treacherous. The result is that Minogue ends up writing about several different things at once. And although he writes about all of them with his usual cheerful vigour and with his usual truculent common sense, he writes about none of them with quite enough care. As he sees it, discussions of ideology pull us sometimes towards analysing what Marx thought was wrong with "the German ideology", sometimes towards analysing political fanaticism, sometimes only towards explaining why people vote for the programme of such non-fanatical outfits as the Labour Party. Minogue pauses long enough to declare no interest in peepology, and then takes off after Marx, both in his guise as the great unmasker of ideology and in his historical role of the begetter of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

So one of Minogue's targets is the shortcomings of Marx. However, people's dismissal of their opponents' opinions as "mere ideology" properly calls for a cold, hard look at the logical problems of the sociology of knowledge, at the problems we create by explaining ideas as outgrowth of social forces, and by trying to distinguish between a realm of "appearance" and a realm of "reality" (as Marx demonstrated when explaining how workers are really robbed of their efforts by their capitalist employers, even though they are paid so much per hour for every hour they work). It is a complex task; it would, if done seriously, need a careful look at such things as the concept of a social system which works through causal processes involving human actors and their beliefs, but which works in such a way that their beliefs are not "ultimate" causal factors. The philosophical exploration of issues like these, and of such notions as that of "false consciousness", is something to which recent work in the philosophy of mind has a great deal to contribute.

Minogue recognizes the range and depth of the problems. And although he writes about them briefly and somewhat scrappily, he writes pretty good sense about such things as the priority of "rational" over "functional" explanation. But he can't concentrate on any of them for long because he wants to do something else as well. And this is to treat Marx's own theory as itself "ideological", not in the sense in which Marx denounced his opponents as ideologists, but in the more recent, abusive sense in which writers such as Daniel Bell, Edward Shils, Lewis Feuer and a lot of much less distinguished professional anti-Marxists have used the term.

Once you define the ideological frame of mind as the frame of mind in which people ascribe all evils to an "alien power", Marx turns up not as the unmasker of ideology, but as one of the chief sufferers from it. It is of course true that in the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, where Marx describes in vivid terms the horrors of "alienated labour", he does claim that men are in the grip of an "alien power" – or even of several, including property, money and the entire system of capitalist production and exchange relationships. But, as Minogue notes, it is not only "the capitalist mode of production" to which thinkers have credited all our ills; "patriarchy" is a favoured candidate among feminists, and some version of "the warfare state" is a favoured candidate among non-Marxist radicals. Moreover, if you widen the net slightly, so that ideologists don't have to believe that *all* our ills but only an impressive selection of the most important ones are the fault of "the system", you pick up a lot more social scientists, whose inability to pin the blame for the evident miseries and injustices of the world on anyone in particular leads them to suggest it must be the system rather than its victims that is to blame.

To his credit, Minogue recognizes that there are plenty of occasions when focusing on the way we interact rather than on anyone's virtues and vices is the way forward. Indeed, a subject which surfaces briefly but doesn't get the treatment it deserves is the difference between a sociology which takes proper account of Adam Smith's discovery of the "invisible hand" and one which sees us as helpless victims of "the system". Is the difference a matter of logic? It is not clear that it is. It is not a difference of evaluation, for Hobbes's state of nature leads by an invisible-hand mechanism to a condition in which life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" in just the same way that individual selfishness leads to general happiness in Smith. The methodological vice involved must partly be a matter of over-generalizing; we rush from the observation that there is an area in which the invisible hand operates either for good or ill

to the conclusion that everything is under the control of invisible hands of one sort or another. In part, as Minogue observes more than once, it is a matter of extending the religious conception of the world into social theory. Ideological politics are – much as Edward Shils has often said – a way of getting transcendental backing for your hopes and fears.

It is rather less to Minogue's credit that he so underplays the fact that the fear of alien powers is at least as marked a feature of conservatives as of radicals; Gobineau pops up a couple of times and race is mentioned a couple of times in addition, but this scarcely does justice to the fact that for every feminist going on about patriarchy, there's a chief constable or two convinced that sexual degeneracy, pot-smoking, racial miscegenation, or the teaching of Darwinian evolution in primary schools is about to bring the roof down. It was one of the virtues of Daniel Bell that if "The End of Ideology" more or less meant "the end of Marxism" as a serious force in Western politics", he saw the ideological frame of mind as something to which the radical Right succumbed just as readily as the radical Left.

None the less, Minogue has some rather good things to say about the defects of the most attractive aspects of Marx's ideas. They are not new things, and some of them are not exactly watertight, but they are well worth repeating, since Marx's appeal for the replacement of capitalism by a "human" economics and politics is perennially attractive. What Minogue argues is that Marx's "human" world could not be one in which the free development of all is a condition of the free development of each because in such a world our individual identity would have vanished. The set text for this argument is the one place in which Marx wrote down what *unalienated* labour would be like – his marginal notes to James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*:

Suppose we had produced things as human beings; in his production each of us would have twice affirmed himself and the other. In my production I would have objectified my individuality and its particularity, and in the course of the activity I would have enjoyed an individual life. . . . In your satisfaction and your use of my product I would have had the direct and conscious satisfaction that my work satisfied a human need, that it objectified human nature, and that it created an object appropriate to the need of another human being. . . . In my individual life I would have directly created your life; in my individual activity I would have immediately confirmed and realised my true human and social nature. Our productions would be so many mirrors reflecting our natures.

On the face of it, nothing could be more obvious than that Marx is here defending individualities, not attacking it. So, what does Minogue have against it? He isn't very

explicit. He says that Marx employs "a language whose only content is universal: mirrors reflecting essential natures and labour affirming life". A little later he agrees that "in moments of high enthusiasm" people can feel utterly fulfilled in playing their parts in a complex activity like a play or a game – but says, very sensibly, that except in such moments there is at least some tension between "playing one's part and being oneself". I think that this must be the right direction to take. Marx's notion of our production and consumption reflecting our individuality works rather well in small groups – especially in successful families, where one might think that the very imperfections of the piece of woodwork a boy brings home to his mum are part of its merits. But, the thought that all our social dealings could have that sort of intimate quality seems quite wrong – as Herbert Spencer observed, "society is not the family writ large". Moreover, as Minogue hints, there is something especially odd about Marx's own version of the story, namely his insistence that we shall somehow be *directly* wholly social as well as individual. How can we be unless we are no more than aspects of some larger whole?

Over the past decade or so, a good many Marxists have tried to rescue Marx from the sort of attack Minogue launches. They have insisted that much more of his social theory belongs to piecemeal social science than Minogue supposes, and that much of his denunciation of "vampire capital" is rhetoric rather than the heart of the theory. Minogue does not attempt to fight off this view of Marx; indeed, it's an oddity of the book that it seems to be directed against a more or less defunct class – the Class of '68. In fact some aspects of the book are more old-fashioned yet, including his reiterated assertion that Marx and Engels created "dialectical materialism", when it's a pretty safe bet that Marx himself would have poured scorn on any such thing. But what chiefly rouses Minogue's ire is what you might call the demonological left, those who used to see everything from the O level Maths syllabus to the follies of American foreign policy as equally aspects of the misdeeds of "the system". Evidently, the third of the projects which have surfaced in this book is the ambition to wipe the floor with all those misguided souls who mistook dissension in the London School of Economics for the ultimate compeupance of imperialist monopoly capitalism. But time and the world have done a more effective job in that department than Kenneth Minogue or anyone else could expect to do, so although he praises his own courage in tackling a "hot subject", he hasn't actually needed much courage – and, happily, has been able to write something other than a mere work of polemic.

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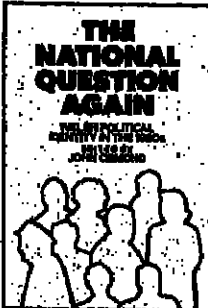
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Simon Hornblower

K. H. WATERS
Herodotus the Historian: His problems, methods and originality
194pp. Croom Helm. £15.95.
070993601 X

In the preface to *Summer Lightning*, P. G. Wodehouse says that he now finds that his title has been used already by somebody else, but he expresses the hope that his own book may be included in any future list of One Hundred Best Books Called *Summer Lightning*. K. H. Waters's new book belongs high in any short-list of general books on Herodotus published by Croom Helm since 1982. The blurb to John Hart's *Herodotus and Greek History* (1982) says "there is no recent work which introduces the student to the work of Herodotus as a whole". Waters's blurb announces that "for the first time in fifty years, K. H. Waters offers in this book a comprehensive introduction to Herodotus' background, aims and methods; a portrait of the historian and his oeuvre seen whole". This is odd enough, coming from the same publisher; it is even odder that Waters never mentions the existence of Hart's book (which is similar in length, scope and price, though Hart is now in paperback). Did nobody at Croom Helm – not a big firm, I think – tell him about it?

Undergraduates find Hart's book useful (books in English about Herodotus have hitherto tended to be slightly mad, like books about Virgil), and they, and the interested adult non-specialist, will probably find Waters equally so, or perhaps a little more, because he has a systematic treatment of Herodotus' sources of information and is altogether a little more sophisticated. On the other hand, for school purposes, Hart may be found preferable; he knows exactly how much needs to be explained to the near-beginner (ie, just about everything), whereas, for instance, Waters's

definition of ostracism as "the curious reverse-election" is not specially helpful. And sometimes (eg. pp 67 and 70) he refers to "recent" studies, but although on both of the occasions cited the word "recent" is flagged by a footnote, he doesn't actually say what the study is.

The slant of Waters's book is historical rather than literary, though we are told that history was a branch of literature – partly on the curious grounds that Clio was the muse of history, and the muses patronized the creative arts. In fact, Clio was just a goddess of song, with *kithara* (lyre), in the fifth century when Herodotus was writing, and appears so equipped on the sixth-century François vase in Florence. She landed the job of muse of history only in late Hellenistic times. This small slip is worth mentioning, because it illustrates a certain fuzziness in Waters's attitude to the word *historiē*, from which our "history" derives. Granted, at Herodotus it may mean just "inquiry" or "research", but vii 96 needed discussing, where the word is closer to the Aristotelian sense of "history" as we now use the word.

For modern students of literature, the chief disappointment of the book, despite its good treatment of, for example, the debt to epic and tragedy (Chapter Six), is that Waters does not deal with the arguments of a work which he nevertheless cites, and mentions in his bibliography, Detlef Fehling's 1971 book in German on the source-attributions in Herodotus (which was virtually ignored by English-speaking reviewers). From the way Waters refers to Fehling in the first footnote of his chapter on the sources, you would not know that Fehling and some others have used Herodotus' various stylized methods of giving source-attributions ("the so-and-sos say that") to mount a general sceptical attack on Herodotus' veracity and claims to autopsy and personal interrogation (the "autopsy" problem is handled, but in the traditional, non-literary way). Waters interestingly observes in another connection that Marco Polo's *Account of his Travels* "con-

stantly repeats the same formulaic phrases". This might have suggested to him one line of reply to Fehling. Another line might be to develop, further than Waters does, the view that Herodotus spoke to identifiable informants (identifiable by us, that is) to whom he does not specifically attribute material. One such informant is Demaratos the exiled king of Sparta: Waters should have told his readers just why Demaratos or his family were likely informants; we happen to know, not from Herodotus but from the fourth-century Xenophon's *History of Greece* (iii 1), that Demaratos was given a fief by the Persian king in the Troad (north-west Turkey). Herodotus, himself a native of Asia Minor, could have visited them there. The famous passage, where King Cleomenes' unpleasant death is described as "retribution to Demaratos", is duly cited in the Religion chapter, but it and an exactly similar passage about yet another Spartan king, Leotychidas, surely deserved mention in the Sources chapter. This is attributable material which goes far to support the account of Herodotus' methods given by Felix

Jacoby. Jacoby was a towering figure in Greek historiography, whom it is slightly absurd to describe, with Waters, as merely the author of a "monumental" work which is "still influential". This casual and condescending remark is virtually the only reference Waters makes to Jacoby's book-length 1913 Pauly article on Herodotus. When a twelve-page bibliography is compiled on principles which allow it to include many German items but omit Jacoby, something, namely a mania for modernity, is wrong with the principles. The remark about Jacoby in the foreword is equally surprising. It is not enough to call him a giant, and ignore him.

But this book is valuable and up to date on many standard topics, such as Herodotus' political attitudes and military deficiencies, even if Waters does not, despite the claim to universality implied by the blurb, really begin to do the sad gap which has opened up in Herodotus (as in Thucydides) studies between the approaches of historical and of literary specialists. Specialists is, after all, something which Herodotus and Thucydides were definitely not.

The filiafocal family

Mary Beard

JUDITH P. HALLETT
Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society: Women and the elite family
352pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£43.10 (paperback, £10.30).
0691 035709

The views of Nigel Molesworth, adolescent anti-hero of *St Custard's*, lurk behind many traditional accounts of the position of women in Roman society. While musing on the problem of "How to be top in Latin", Molesworth presents his readers with a quartet of "Grate Latin Lies": "The customs of the Gauls were honourable"; "Great crimes were rare in ancient times"; "The girls were beautiful"; "All the Romans love home". The mendacity of these last two statements is demonstrated by the accompanying illustrations: an over-painted, raven-haired tart, who has obviously seen better days, and a cowering henpecked paterfamilias, thinking, no doubt, during the tirade of his wife, that even ten years on Hadrian's Wall would be preferable to a home life like this.

Caricature – but only up to a point. The Molesworth view, in fact, finds clear echoes in the clichéd images of textbook histories of Roman women: the joyless matron of the early Republic, urging her sons to the glory of battle and submitting to death rather than adultery; her loose-living counterpart in the late Republic – the rampant middle-aged *femina fatale* (Clodia) pouncing on unsuspecting young poets (Catullus). Such views have not, of course, gone entirely unchallenged; different clichés are on hand to tell a different story. Recent fashion has given us a series of deeply pessimistic accounts of the lives of Roman women – women as an oppressed class, within an unbending patriarchy. Here the telling image is not that of the dominating matriarch, but of the powerless daughter slain for falling victim to the wiles of a seducer; not that of the helpless poet, but of the stern paterfamilias whose policing of his female relatives might extend to the practice of kissing – an easy diagnostic test, mouth to mouth, of whether alcohol had passed their lips. This is all very well as far as it goes and is, in my view, a marked improvement on Molesworth and his like; but, if the only question is "Wasn't it tough for women then?", the answer is bound to be an obviously true, but not very interesting, "Yes".

Roman studies have not, by and large, kept pace with recent work on the position of women (and with it the representation of sexuality) in the Greek world. Here the – ultimately fruitless – questions that preoccupied earlier generations (Could elite women in classical Athens walk freely in the street? Could they attend the theatre? have generally given way to more sophisticated, and at the same time more answerable, questions: How was "woman" perceived within the Greek social order? To what extent were women

integrated into male cultural categories? How do the poetic and linguistic structures of tragedy, say, or lyric locate and define an image of women? Many such issues are interestingly handled in the recent, excellent, collection *Images of Women in Antiquity*, edited by Averil Cameron and Amelie Kubrt (1983), a volume which, significantly, despite its title, contains no essay primarily devoted to women at Rome.

In this context, Judith Hallett's *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society* is a step in the right direction. She offers an analysis of women's roles within the elite Roman family and tries to identify the particular axis of power open to women within the essentially patriarchal family group. "Filiafocality" is seen to be the hallmark of the Roman family – a particular bond of affect between fathers and daughters, which gave to the daughter of the house a "structurally central" role within (and sometimes outside) the domestic sphere and provided a model for her later relationship with her husband.

Hallett is surely right to emphasize that patriarchy comes in many shapes and sizes. It is not sufficient to show simply that Roman society was patriarchal; the more challenging question – and one which she tries to face – is how precisely patriarchy operated within Roman patterns of kinship and within Roman social and cultural forms. She is also right to draw attention to the ideological stress laid by many Roman writers (in contrast to, for example, their classical Athenian counterparts) on the relationship between father and daughter. The best-known, and not it seems entirely untypical, instance of this is Cicero's relationship with his daughter Tullia, whose death in middle age he greeted with an extravagant period of mourning and plan for her immortalization ("apotheosis") in a lavish shrine.

Impossible to accept is Hallett's central thesis that such "filiafocality" can be seen straightforwardly as an axis of female power within the private sphere at Rome. The cultural emphasis on the ties of affect between father and daughter had surely more than one face. In part, no doubt, it enhanced the position of certain elite women within their domestic role; but in part also it must have served to bolster and justify the power of the paterfamilias inside and outside the home. Patriarchy is always nervous; it constantly seeks to justify its own rule. So, for example, the common ancient and modern "myth of patriarchy" with its stress, in the end, on the dire effects of the rule of women, has been convincingly analysed as a mythological "excuse" for the rule of men. Is it not likely that this Roman image of a protective and affectionate father, with his dependent and loving daughter, functioned to justify the power of Roman fathers and the patriarchal system as a whole? Paraded affection, between the most powerful and the weakest members of the family demonstrated (conveniently for the Roman fathers) that patriarchy was a "natural" and benevolent system. So daughters were kept in their place.

An enduring resourcefulness

Geoffrey Hosking

MICHAEL SCAMMELL
Solzhenitsyn: A biography
1,051pp. Hutchinson. £18.
009 1512808

There is a temptation when writing about Solzhenitsyn to deal in superlatives, whether describing his faults or his strengths. It is a great merit of Michael Scammell's biography that it presents a very human figure. To undertake a biography of a writer at all during his lifetime is inevitably hazardous. When, in addition, that author has written his own autobiography, and has used it as a weapon in the struggle against his enemies, then the task becomes truly daunting. When David Burg and George Feifer attempted it some twelve years ago, they were roundly denounced for their pains by their subject, in terms that might well have discouraged others: "The collection of 'information' in this way is not different from police spying. I regard the publication of such biographies as ill-mannered and immoral..."

Scammell took up the challenge, however, and the result fully justifies what must have been a labour of both love and tact. In the intervening years, he has been able to use many more published sources, and to interview many more people, than his predecessors. Most remarkably, he won for a time the confidence of Solzhenitsyn himself, interviewed him at length and corresponded with him, and was authorized to approach close friends and relatives. Perhaps Solzhenitsyn was swayed by the argument that publication of a reliable biography would help to combat Soviet misrepresentations of his life. However that may be, he did in fact later cut short the correspondence in a manner which Scammell describes as "friendly but final", as "the procedure did not suit Solzhenitsyn's temperament or work habits".

One of the most valuable new features of Scammell's work is the light it throws on the period before Solzhenitsyn's literary career proper began. In his youth he was almost the ideal "Soviet man". He eagerly studied Marx and Lenin, edited the students' "wall newspaper" at Rostov University and was awarded a much sought-after Stalin scholarship for service in the Komsomol and for outstanding achievement in his chosen subjects, physics and mathematics. At the same time, he enrolled in the correspondence department of MIFLI (the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History) to study literature, for already by 1938, at the age of nineteen, he had conceived the plan for a huge epic novel, modelled on *War and Peace*, but taking as its subject the Russian Revolution. He had even done three months' research (in the Rostov library in 1937) on General Samsonov's campaign of August 1914 in East Prussia, the failure of which seemed to him the first stage in the collapse of the old Russia. The plan survived war service, prison, labour camp, exile, provincial obscurity and a Nobel Prize-winning literary career, to become what is today his paramount concern. Even the notes on Samsonov came through it all to take their place in *August 1914*, a novel not published till 1971.

The remarkable durability of Solzhenitsyn's purposes would mark him out from most men, in Soviet or any other society. Though a product of his society, he was in no sense a typical one. As Scammell points out, he was not, even in his youth, quite the kind of "Soviet man" desired by the Communist Party leaders. The driving idealism of his commitment to Marx and Lenin (he took *Das Kapital* on his honeymoon and read it) was already something of an anachronism by the 1930s: it consorted ill with the growing cynicism and conservatism of Stalin's emergent ruling class. Solzhenitsyn and his close friend Nikolai Vitkevich were in fact already by this time clear that they disapproved of Stalin, whose régime they considered "feudal" and therefore detrimental to the economic and cultural development of the country. Scammell reveals that in 1943 the two of them, by then officers in the Red Army, drafted a political manifesto, which they called "Resolution No 1", analysing the current social system and putting forward an action programme to bring about change.

They had the prudence to keep it secret (Vitkevich stored his copy throughout the war in his gas-mask holder), but all the same they wrote letters to each other in their respective units, making disparaging comments about Stalin (not named directly, but concealed only in transparent epithets). This bold and naive disregard for the military censorship led to Solzhenitsyn's arrest in early 1945, and thus inaugurated the second stage of his existence as "Soviet man", his odyssey through the labour camps.

Drawing on material from *The Gulag Archipelago* and from Solzhenitsyn's first wife, Natalia Reshetovskaya (who now seems to regret the propagandistic use made of her memoirs by their Soviet publishers), as well as from interviews with men such as Lev Kopelev and Dmitri Panin, who knew Solzhenitsyn closely in the camps, Scammell is able to give us a full and discriminating account of this odyssey. By his own admission, in the early stages of his confinement, he still acted as a fledgling member of the Soviet elite, striving to avoid the lethal "general duties", such as breaking stones in quarries, and to join the "trusties", the prisoners used by the authorities to run the details of work and life in the camps, and often recruited by them to inform on the ordinary inmates. He was himself briefly recruited in this way, but seems to have furnished no damaging information before suddenly being transferred elsewhere. He thus came within a whisker of being a pillar of the Stalinist system – a fact which, to his credit, he has fully confessed in *The Gulag Archipelago*.

In the long run the camps took Solzhenitsyn in quite the opposite direction. They taught him far more than he and Vitkevich had ever guessed about the true nature of Stalinist society. In the end they brought him to the conviction, stimulated partly by his Christian friend, Panin, that the evil went deeper than Stalin's "excesses": it lay at the foundation of the Russian Revolution itself, and therefore in Marx and Lenin. Instead of avoiding physical work, he learnt manual skills and the art of surviving in fearful conditions, through cunning and through taking the line of least resistance (though it should be noted that Solzhenitsyn has always insisted that he did not experience the worst camps himself, and refers to his remarkable confrère, Varlam Shalamov, for an adequate account of them).

In the *sharashka* (the privileged camp for highly trained scientists to which Solzhenitsyn gained admittance by virtue of his mathematics degree) he learnt a new form of comradeship, wholly "un-party-minded", between men who, freed from concerns over career and family by the fearful irony of arrest, devoted themselves through conversation and exchange of experience to an open-minded and genuine search for truth, such as they could scarcely have conducted in freedom. Solzhenitsyn, who had pre-

viously chafed at five minutes' interruption to his cherished studying and writing, now had to endure eight years' abstinence, not counting army service and exile, and learnt a new humility and acceptance, a submission to fate (or to God's will) hitherto totally alien to his wilful, decisive nature.

In the last year of his camp life he underwent a religious conversion based on this experience. The faith it kindled has always remained mysterious to me, and is not elucidated in this biography. Perhaps it was a return to the traditional Orthodox piety of his aunt Irina, under whose spell he fell as a child. Certainly in recent years he has always identified himself – though very critically – with the Orthodox Church.

Yet, curiously, though he once had a project for building a church, there is scant evidence of his actually attending Orthodox services. Indeed Scammell reports that in his years in Vermont Solzhenitsyn has never gone to the Orthodox church a mere fifteen miles away, but receives the priest in his own home. Scammell speculates that he is in fact a deist and "does not understand mysticism or the life of the church"; nor does he find the humility demanded of the believer easy to achieve. That does not quite accord with the mystical description of Samsonov's final hours in the forest in *August 1914*. But then, that passage is full of another feeling which Scammell rightly discerns as being central to Solzhenitsyn's religion: Russian patriotism.

His devotion to Russia derived from his childhood, as well as from the love of the Russian literary classics inculcated at MIFLI. It did not really become a dominant passion, however, until his return from Siberian exile to central Russia, where he had only previously been on a memorable youthful cycling trip. Here, in the rural settlement he depicts in *Matryona's Place*, he found a peace and a homeliness he had not experienced before. This was the "other Russia", the Russia trampled underfoot in headlong urbanization, industrialization and the "building of socialism". Since Solzhenitsyn had by now wholly rejected the Soviet pursuit of forced industrial growth, he came to see the despised and backward countryside as embodying the values which alone could bring spiritual health to his nation.

Solzhenitsyn's literary ambitions were interrupted by the camps, but, incredibly, they were not in the end seriously deflected. If anything, they became more intense. While in confinement he devised the most remarkable expedients to continue writing, even though so much as keeping a pencil or a piece of paper was strictly forbidden. He would compose poetry in his head, using a system of match-sticks or a rosary made out of soaked bread in order to memorize the lines in groups of ten. Prose could not be put together in this way, so he had to abandon that for a time.

These feats of authorial resourcefulness, reminiscent of an oral culture, made the later difficulties of his literary career seem mild. After his release from the camps, during the long years of exile and of schoolteaching in Ryazan', he had not only pencil and paper, but even a typewriter. He set about transforming his pre-camp literary and political zeal into a project for bearing witness to what the Soviet people had suffered unrecorded during the Stalin years. At this juncture, he had not the remotest idea how he might eventually bring his work before the public: indeed he rather assumed that he would have to bury it away for posterity. With that in mind, he used his paper with extreme parsimony, typing on both sides without margins or spaces, and burning drafts as soon as fair copies were ready. These conspiratorial habits were later to prove infuriating to his editors.

Then, in 1962, when he was forty-four, came the great turning-point. Paradoxically, it was the Soviet system – which had held him underground for so long – that now gave him the impetus for his rise to fame. The repressed returned with tremendous force – but only after the Soviet leader himself, Nikita Khrushchev, had intervened to remove the road-blocks.

It is often forgotten, but sometimes the sheer quality of a literary work is an important factor in politics. *Ivan Denisovich* would never have got as far as Khrushchev (and thus eluded the censorship) if it had not enough the imagination of Alexander Tvardovsky, the editor of the journal *Novy mir*. He had taken it home one evening to read in bed, as was his wont with newly submitted typescripts, but soon after settling down he decided that the story deserved his total concentration. So he got up again, dressed and read it through the night. According to Victor Nekrasov (as quoted by Scammell), the next morning in tremendous excitement he rushed round to colleagues, exclaiming, "They say that Russian literature's been killed. Damn and blast it! It's in this folder with the ribbons... I'll go to the very top, to Nikita!" As for Khrushchev, he shared with Tvardovsky a taste for the demotic, and he was similarly appreciative of the story's earthy language and laconic intensity. *Ivan Denisovich* may have fitted neatly into Khrushchev's current anti-Stalin campaign, but without this literary impact, it would never have broken through the barriers.

The story produced the same stunning effect on the reading public. The blue volume of *Novy mir* which contained it was sold out almost before it reached the bookstalls. The forceful evocation of a world hitherto mentioned in the Soviet Union only under one's breath called forth a surge of feeling, especially from those who still suffered from the stigma of the camps. Readers wrote to Solzhenitsyn: "For me and others like me your story was the last hope that justice still exists somewhere, that it has not vanished or died out"; "Although I wept as I read it, at last I felt myself to be an equal citizen with all the rest, whereas up to now I have felt only hostile looks reminding me of Pechora and Norilsk"; "Take care of yourself, Alexander Isayevich, because now that you've written *Ivan Denisovich*, your life no longer belongs to you alone". Solzhenitsyn became, in short, the focus of a powerful welling up of long-suppressed feelings and hopes – powerful not only in the emotional, but in the political sense.

Admitted to the Writers' Union, borne aloft on a wave of newly acknowledged public feeling, Solzhenitsyn became for a year or two, in his own way, a Soviet writer, a "true helper of the party", even a candidate for the Lenin Prize. He used this period to prepare the way for the publication of his two novels on the Stalin period, *The First Circle* and *Cancer Ward*, as well as publishing short stories. At this stage, as Scammell shows, he behaved as all Soviet writers have to, negotiating with editors, altering words and cutting unacceptable passages, though far less than most, since he operated from a much stronger bargaining position. He did what in his autobiography he approaches Tvardovsky for doing, manoeuvring and compromising, yielding on minor points for the sake of the greater purpose – the publication of the truth. He enjoyed the income of a Soviet writer, living for some years on the advances which *Novy mir*

Rock-hewers royal

Kenneth Kitchen

JOHN ROMER
Ancient Lives: The story of the pharaohs' tombmakers
235pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.
0297 785501

Faced with the centuries-old tradition of robbing royal tombs, the pharaohs of the Egyptian Empire (c.1550 – 1070 BC) sought a new form of security for their own rich burials. They had great tunnel-tombs cut deep in the rock in utterly barren valleys in the hills to the west of Thebes. For this purpose, they created a special community of royal workmen in a desert village behind a low hill, entirely supplied from the fertile valley and the city of Thebes proper. During the Eighteenth Dynasty, the villagers lived comfortably but modestly, until the religious upheaval under Akhenaten. The community was fully re-established by Haremhab, and attained great prosperity in the Nineteenth Dynasty, especially under Ramesses II; during the Twentieth Dynasty, it shared in the decline of the Ramesside empire, with whose fall its tomb-building function ceased. From the Ramesside period, an uneven mass of written documentation has survived, permitting us a uniquely detailed, even intimate insight into the lives and characters of these tomb-builders as a human community, over and above what we learn of the details of their work and its organization.

In this book John Romer has endeavoured to convey something of the vivid panorama available from such sources. He does so in a lively, fluent, eminently readable style, following historical sequences – prosperity under Sethos I, Ramesses II and Merneptah; times of tension under lesser kings, and of change and incipient hardship under Ramesses III; then decline and much harder times under the later Ramessides. The author's photographs are of a high standard, and his wife's sketches are delightful. In the text, a variety of ancient characters are brought back to life, the whole written in a style which is both accurate and

Ramose and the foreman Neferhotep the younger; or the abrupt scribe Qen-hir-khopshef and the firebrand foreman Paneb. Mr Romer does well to insist on the remarkable quality of artistic achievement attained by successive generations of this work-force, even in the days of Egypt's national decline on other fronts.

However, it should be said that by no means all the interpretations offered are necessarily convincing or correct; Romer makes sweeping statements and gives evidence of carelessness and too much haste in the writing. It is wrong to state that the villagers never referred to kings before the Eighteenth Dynasty; selected monarchs and princes are commemorated in tombs, on monuments and in lists and rituals from the village. The decrees for Amenhotep son of Hapu is known only from a late hieratic version, and the Ramesside kings were of military, not simply scribal origins. The great temple of Ptah is at Memphis, not Heliopolis, domain of the sun-god Re. The major reorganization of the village community goes back to Haremhab, not just to Paser under Sethos I – under the latter, it was enlarged, but not significantly changed. On p 22, delete "Re" from "the King Re" – here, in using an Italian translation, Romer has confused the Egyptian god Re with the Italian word *re*, "king" – in the original Egyptian text, "king" occurs, but Re does not. This points up the danger of writing at second hand, without personal control of the Egyptian sources. On p 125, Romer's understanding of the background to problems under Ramesses III is very precarious. On a permanent basis, the Egyptian government and court had ruled from Memphis (not Thebes) ever since Thutmose III of the fifteenth century, not just as late as the twelfth, and the bestowal of the double viceroyship upon Thebes could not help the community in Thebes, but kept him in the north even more, remote from their troubles. And so on.

But when all is said and done, Romer's book remains a highly attractive presentation, well fitted to reach a wider readership, with its wholly justified stress on the endearing humanity of the ancient Egyptians, who were people, in every way as alert and real as ourselves.

Voronezh

(after Akhmatova)

You walk on permafrost
in these streets,
The town's silly and heavy
like a glass paperweight
stuck on a desk –
a wide steel one
glib as this pavement.
I trimp on ice,
the sledges skitter and slip.
Crows are crowding the poplars,
and St. Peter's of Voronezh
is an acidgreen dome
fizzing in the flecked light.
The earth's stout as a bell –

it hums like that battle
on the Field of Snipes.
Lord let each poplar
take the shape of a wine-glass
and I'll make it ring
as though the priest's wed us.
But that tin lamp
on the poet's table
was watched last night
Judah and the Word
are stalking each other
through this scroggy town,
where every line has three stresses
and only the one word, dark.

TOM PAULIN

paid for works that in the event they were unable to bring out. Even when the anti-Stalin campaign was over and hints of "re-Stalinization" were in the air, he still at first thought of official Soviet publication as the natural way to bring what he had to say before the world. Perhaps for that reason, the KGB's discovery of some of his unpublished manuscripts in September 1965 plunged him for a while into a deep depression — premonitions of helpless reimmersion in Gulag? — from which, however, he eventually recovered with redoubled resilience and determination.

He was now discovering that there were other methods for combating the Stalinists than working with the "liberals" to publish in official Soviet journals. This was the period when the first dissenters were trying out another technique: duplicating and circulating letters and documents ("self-publishing" or *samizdat*), and ultimately distributing them to the Western news media, with whose aid they could be published abroad and rebroadcast to the Soviet listener, through the BBC Russian Service and similar channels. It is difficult for us now to remember how daring this device originally seemed: in Stalin's time such contact with foreigners was considered to be not merely washing dirty linen in public, but downright treason. As Scammell shows, Solzhenitsyn was initially quite reluctant to transgress this taboo, and criticized those who did. His stand was motivated not only by the requirements of an officially acceptable posture, but by a certain genuine abhorrence. In the end, however, as first silence and then deliberate misinformation began to surround his name in

the official Soviet media, he came to the conclusion that he had to make use of any weapon available to him.

In this way Solzhenitsyn found himself in another uneasy alliance, this time with the Western media, whose aims and objects he shared no more than he did those of the Soviet Writers' Union. The mismatch was evident in the first Western interview he gave, to Hedrick Smith of the *New York Times* and Robert Kaiser of the *Washington Post*. When the two of them arrived, Solzhenitsyn produced a bulky manuscript out of his desk: it was the text of his "interview", with questions and answers pre-packaged in classical *Pravda* style. One can sympathize with the astonishment and indignation of Smith and Kaiser. Yet one can also understand Solzhenitsyn's position. This was the only journalistic method he had ever known; besides, publicity was now his strongest weapon, and he naturally felt the need for total control over it.

Solzhenitsyn's discordant relationship with the Western media reached a climax soon after he was dumped defenceless into their hands by his forcible deportation from the Soviet Union in 1974. Pursued mercilessly by reporters anxious for a scoop, he refused them even the sop of a ten-minute improvised press conference, and eventually roared at them in fury: "You're worse than the KGB. Go away. I want to be alone." For a newcomer used to a tightly leashed press, of course, the importunities of Western journalists were alien and alarming. Besides, as Scammell comments with some understatement: "He was not comfortable with the notion that the price of freedom was

the freedom to write trash as well as articles of high quality, to be trivial, sensational, irresponsible, as well as serious and objective."

These early contretemps were but the prelude to the jarring relationship Solzhenitsyn has enjoyed with the Western world as a whole. Many Westerners have felt that his sometimes withering comments on our politics and politicians, indeed on our whole way of life, reflect prejudice and lack of information rather than considered judgment, and that it would be better for his reputation if he refrained from pronouncements on subjects with which he is not fully conversant. Scammell defends Solzhenitsyn from such criticisms where he feels they have been unjust, as, for instance, over his comment that Franco's dictatorship in Spain was milder than the Soviet version. All the same, Scammell does share the widely held view that Solzhenitsyn should stick to literature.

The success and impact of *The Gulag Archipelago* carried a lesson for Solzhenitsyn that he was most unwilling to learn — namely, that the power of the written word leaving from the pen of Solzhenitsyn the creative artist was out of all proportion to the power he wielded as a publicist and journalist. . . . He did not seem to realise that direct political statements like his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* and his somewhat strident views on détente were doing him more harm than good, and undoing his reputation as a writer.

I cannot agree with this judgment. Solzhenitsyn's literary work, though powerful because of its high quality as such, is full of political implications, which are fully intended. Convinced that he speaks for the long-suppressed Soviet (and especially Russian) people, Solzhenitsyn, even more than past Russian writers, has felt it positively his duty to open the eyes of East and West alike to the dangers he believes the world is facing. It would be unthinkable for him not to act on this conviction.

What is much more surprising, in my opinion, is the resentment with which many Westerners have greeted his statements. After all, we are used to our own intellectuals and politicians making one-sided judgments. Besides, anyone who is not totally complacent about

Western political life must concede some justice to many of his warnings. Perhaps the truth is that Western intellectuals, no less than Soviet ones, long for a prophet, and become disappointed and even enraged when a man we had expected to assume this role reveals himself to be less than omniscient and dispassionate on every issue.

The greater danger for Solzhenitsyn seems to me that the tone of his political pronouncements has begun to seep into his literary work. *August 1914*, especially in the recently revised and expanded version, contains some of Solzhenitsyn's finest writing, but it also offers a rather melodramatic and one-sided interpretation of Russian history, which threatens to flatten his characters, impoverish the interplay of their ideas and render his language importunate and didactic — in a word, to undermine the quality of his art. The dissenter and now émigré Pavel Litvinov once wrote to him: "In your books you destroy the myth that there are quick and obvious solutions to the various problems that people face, yet in your public statements you create the impression that a single solution exists and that you know what it is. And then you start to believe it yourself." This tendency, if it continues to penetrate his literary writings, could seriously weaken the counterpoint of ideas and personalities which distinguished *Ivan Denisovich*, *The First Circle* and *Cancer Ward*. Solzhenitsyn once called his novels "polyphonic". Reduced to unison, they lose much of their profundity.

Who are we, however, to give advice to Solzhenitsyn? The important thing is that Michael Scammell has given us a comprehensive picture of the man. He displays exemplary industry and tact in winking out the facts of his life, and he shows balanced judgment in assessing obscure incidents and controversial opinions. Without being overawed by his subject, he defends Solzhenitsyn against the more superficial Western criticisms, and is tireless in exposing Soviet misinformation about him. This superb biography will certainly be the standard account of the most remarkable literary life story of our time.

came when (masquerading this time as an Albanian) he was actually recruited by the Soviet secret service, and sent off to infiltrate the besieged city of Bokhara, then still controlled by its staunchly anti-Bolshevik emir, whence he eventually made his way across the desert to Persia and safety.

All these adventures took place against the background of Lenin's dream of stirring up trouble in India and the rest of Asia as a kind of backdoor way into the promised world revolution which had failed to materialize in Europe. That this vast project failed was due to a variety of causes; partly to Lenin's own misreading of the situation, and not least to the vigilance of British intelligence. But in the chaos created by the Civil War, Lenin was not the only one to have a dream; among his adversaries in the vast expanses of Siberia and Central Asia, there were others who dreamt of a different kind of conquest. Surveying that scene, Hopkirk has assembled a fairly grisly cast of characters, but none grislier than the fanatical White Russian, Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, who saw himself as a reincarnation of Genghis Khan, whose reckless courage was matched only by his ferocious cruelty, and who waded through hordes of corpses in pursuit of his vision of a new Mongolian empire, until he met his end before a Red Army firing squad. There were, of course, other rather more appealing figures in the resistance to Bolshevism, and it is impossible not to feel pity for the gallant Enver Pasha, in his vain attempt to rally the peoples of the Turkic-speaking Crescent.

Some of the episodes and characters in this great and shadowy struggle remain obscure, and few of the participants in it can still be alive; but Peter Hopkirk has made discriminating use of the available resources, including a number of published accounts long out of print, and his narrative rolls along at a brisk pace. There are a few minor errors (eg. Dushanbe for Dushanbe), but the maps are for once, extremely helpful, and the illustrations often a revelation in themselves.

The discovery of a lost Graham Greene masterpiece is certainly news.

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The boilermakers' lot

A. G. CROSS

HARVEY PITCHER

The Smiths of Moscow: A story of Britons abroad
178pp. Swallow House Books, 37 Bernard Road, Cromer, Norfolk. £5.95.
0905265 017

British merchants, doctors and mercenaries were to be found in Moscow from the late sixteenth century and formed a small but not insignificant group in the *Nemetskaya sloboda* or Foreigners' Quarter, founded in 1652 to protect the Muscovites from Western contamination and heresy. Peter the Great, well and truly contaminated even before his momentous visit to Holland and England in 1698, was to allow foreigners to settle more or less where they wished. At the turn of the century there was a considerable influx of Britons into Russia, and with the appointment of a permanent envoy from 1704 and of a chaplain, maintained by the British Factory (as members of the again expanding Russia Company were called in Russia), the British colony developed a sense of corporate identity. But it was to be in the newly founded St Petersburg — official capital from 1712, then home of the diplomatic corps and finally, from 1723, trading centre of the Empire — that the British truly flourished, numbering some 1,500 residents towards the end of Catherine the Great's reign, dominating trade and surrounded by their own institutions and comforts. Few Britons remained in Moscow — the odd factory-owner, doctor, merchant (it was, incidentally, in the house recently acquired by his father from the British merchant banker Rowan that the poet Pushkin was born in 1799), and only during the reign of Alexander I did numbers increase: they were estimated at about 200 in 1825, when the Moscow British at last acquired their own permanent place of worship.

The story that Harvey Pitcher undertakes to tell in his new book is that of the Moscow British at a somewhat later period — from the time of the Crimean War up to their tragic dispersal following the October Revolution. It forms a fascinating companion volume to his hugely successful *When Miss Emile was in Russia* (1977), which traced the experience of British governesses in Russia, particularly during the first two decades of this century. Mr Pitcher himself suggests that "The world of the English governesses in Russia was very dif-

ferent from that of the Smiths of Moscow", a world dominated by the twin poles of the Russian aristocracy and peasantry as opposed to a middle-class business and commercial milieu; but the demarcation is not absolute and fates converge and overlap, not least in the pathetic finale, when the Revd Frank North, the resourceful British Chaplain at St Andrew's, Moscow, organized the repatriation of many of his bewildered flock. *When Miss Emile* was largely based on the oral and written reminiscences of a handful of former governesses, and its publication brought Pitcher a flood of interesting letters from other people who had lived in Russia or from their descendants. Among them was a letter from a certain Harry Smith, born in Moscow in 1892 and living out the last years of a long life in Victoria, British Columbia. It was from his account of the fortunes of the Smith family in Russia that the present book has emerged.

The first Smith to go to Russia was Richard, a boilermaker from Glasgow, who in 1848 began work near St Petersburg at an industrial complex preparing rolling-stock for the Petersburg-Moscow railway. In 1856 he set up his own business in Moscow — the "Smith Boiler Works" — that was to develop by the end of the century into the biggest concern of its type in Russia. The management of the firm was taken over in 1892 by his two sons, John and Richard junior, and from 1904, by Richard junior alone. Harry Smith inherited the firm on his father's death in 1914 and saw it through its last difficult years of war and revolution before leaving for England with his family at the very beginning of 1918. They were to be followed later that year by the widow and daughters of Harry's uncle John.

Using "of the original, eight pounds of Harry's text only an ounce or two", Pitcher has drawn on written accounts by other members of the Smith clan and on a number of other sources, including the Moscow church records, to produce not merely a history of a family over three generations but also an absorbing picture of the Moscow British in their everyday life, their achievements and disasters, their relationships with the Russians. The full story of the British in Russia is still to be told, but Pitcher, firstly with *When Miss Emile* and now with *The Smiths of Moscow*, has made a substantial contribution. It remains a matter of some astonishment and regret that no publisher was prepared to take on the book; Pitcher has done the job himself, and handsomely.

On the frontier

Erik de Mauny

PETER HOPKIRK

Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin's dream of an empire in Asia
252pp. John Murray. £10.95.
07195 41026

It is appropriate that Peter Hopkirk should begin his exciting narrative of British derring-do in Central Asia, in the period following the October Revolution in Russia, with a quotation from John Buchan's *Greenmantle*. It may be remembered that Buchan (writing with foresight in 1916) dispatched his hero, Richard Hannay, to the East to try to thwart a hostile conspiracy aimed at fomenting revolution throughout Asia, and particularly in British India. This was also the mission of Mr Hopkirk's real-life hero, Colonel F. M. Bailey, when in the summer of 1918 he set out from the British Consulate-General at Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan for Tashkent, which had already been taken over by the Bolsheviks. What followed provides a classic example of truth outpacing fiction — indeed, by comparison with Bailey's adventures during sixteen months in Communist-held territory, most modern fictions of secret service work seem almost anaemic.

Colonel Bailey was admirably equipped for his dangerous task. As a young Tibetan-speaking subaltern, he had accompanied the Young-husband expedition to Lhasa in 1904, and he later travelled extensively in Tibet and China. In the First World War, after being wounded in Flanders and at Gallipoli, he was assigned to intelligence work in northern Persia, and thus had acquired a first-hand knowledge of cross-frontier intrigues, before ever setting out for Tashkent. Once there, he lived for many months in imminent danger of arrest by the Cheka, and escaped only through his mastery of disguise, posing at various times as an Austrian cook, as a Galician POW, as a Lett and as a Romanian. His crowning achievement

High flights and dutiful dailiness

Barbara Hardy

STANLEY MIDDLETON
Valley of Decision
214pp. Hutchinson. £8.95.
0091594308

Grey and grim in its naturalism, *The Valley of Decision* is skilfully stylized. The central pair, David and Mary, are supported domestically and structurally by a quartet of parents, one pair middle-middle and the other lower-middle class. Like Ivy Compton-Burnett, Stanley Middleton shrinks the theatre of conflict to the scale of a family interior. The many minor characters are mostly so featureless and so explicitly illustrative that the inner stage is spotlighted and isolated. The crisis in marriage, leading the young couple through the "valley of decision", is totally exposed to their parents (the title seems grandiose and misleading, since these people, like others, have decisions made for them by time, *milieu*, and sex). The husband shows his wife's letters to his mother, the wife confides everything to her parents. The knots of marriage are untied and tied at family meals and in family telephone calls. The tiny, ordinary world is a set for the everyday, unheroic decencies which the novel dramatizes.

Family relations are emphasized, and so are domestic surfaces. The people drink as many cups of tea and coffee as the Archers, and the reader's mouth grows gritty with biscuits. The

routines of heating, lighting, electric blankets, kettles and alarm clocks mark the motions of intimate caring as well as the grinding dailiness of obligation and survival. The novel is a mine of information about provincial culture – content and time of meals, survival of twin beds, local musical patronage; its drama of professional choices for women and men may have a provincial slant. But its sociology, though fascinating, is not the point. The humble household gods speak a solemn message.

There are some concessions to the liberated 1980s in which the novel is set, but Mary's choices are in the end as restricted as those of her talented mother-in-law, and other women whose histories are glimpsed in what David calls "minatory parables". The problems of women's roles and work are not exploratorily varied; Middleton's stoical women are as disappointed as Purcell's Dido or Handel's Semele, in spite of a suggestion that *Dido and Aeneas* finds its reversal in stay-at-home widowers and empire-seeking heroines. But liberation is not what the novel is about either. Its concerns are the decencies and constrictions through which most men and women manage their living and dying. David feels on one occasion that he can't grasp the facts of famine in Somalia, "avoidable tragedy", only his "present state". When Mary, the high-flier, passionately attacks the waste lands of golfcourses and television, he soberly proposes that God may think it more important to ask "Whether these people were living moral lives, were good

husbands or fathers or neighbours". The novel is persuasive in arguing its moral norms. David tests his limits by facing suicide, only to admit the small scale of his care and dourly award himself "a lowly place in the second division of love". The novel insists on the duties of ordinary, muted, neighbourly help, more persistent than the high flights of passion.

Sentences and narration are often clumsy, at times in ways that should have been corrected in revision or editing, though the book's awkwardness and laboriousness can seem apt. Its handling of the symbolism of Dido and Semele is conventional and thin, but these fancies are compensated for by the imaginative representation of music. Playing and listening punctuate the monotonous routine. Singing refreshes stale images of daily life in the way that jazz can soar above the glum humdrum of Philip Larkin's world (on one occasion David "grumbly" refers to "Church Going"). Most of the important characters are musicians, professional or amateur; music is work and play. The concert descriptions occasionally verge on the arch or lush, but are usually powerful, bringing a numinous element into the dull subliminary world. What is understated in the human relations is released in the musical scenes and images, as erotic beauty and passion. Middleton makes an original attempt to translate music into words, and to realize, obliquely, the ideals of freedom, mutuality, and creative energy which the dutiful dailiness of life stifles but can at times admit.

Between lives

Miranda Seymour

ROSALIND BRACKENBURY
Sense and Sensuality
255pp. Brighton: Harvester. £8.95.
0710809115

Alice Linnell is the product of two worlds, evoked by Rosalind Brackenbury with marvellous cunning in a dreamlike sequence of the images which are the most powerful of childhood memories, those triggered by smell and taste. The sensible and the sensual are the two poles round which Alice's future experience will turn; austerity and luxury are the extremes which will govern her choices in life.

On one hand, a freezing house with too many children in it, in which a man, her father, reads *The New Statesman*, and reckons up his bills for the month, frowning, and a woman, her mother, scrubs nappies and muddy clothes in a sink with no detergent in it until her knuckles bleed. On the other, a room in which a woman lies in bed reading the newspaper after breakfast and gets up into silk underwear, in time to come down for a glass of sherry before lunch; in which there are thirty pairs of shoes; in a house where Aptedford waters are to be had. The post-war and the pre-war. . . . And she, Alice, whoever she is, finding her way between them, all the while.

Behind the soft powdered face of Alice's grandmother, an elegant old woman in a *crêpe de chine* nightdress, is the childhood nightmare, the thing sensed and not seen, "the wolf's pelt, the snapping shining teeth". In the home where, as the only daughter in a brood of boys, Alice is always secondary, she has dreams of excelling, of perpetuating the moment of glory when, one summer sports day, she dazzled with the speed of her cartwheels. Perched high in a green sycamore, hidden, while the family cry her name among the rose trees and the cabbages, Alice chants Kipling to herself and realizes that here, in poetry, is the way to wield the magic:

It was a way of handling all this: the randomness, the overflowing of life, the contrasts, the red and the gold. It was a way past the sickening sensation that came with the too-beautiful colours of the sky at evening, a way through the impossible.

At Cambridge in 1960, dressed in regulation black sweater and drainpipe trousers, Alice is less committed to becoming a poet. Sensuality or, more precisely, the longing for a lover, any lover, governs her life as she trails in the wake of Fenella, a girl both more glamorous and more ordinary than herself. Men fall, almost literally, at Fenella's fashionably shod feet; Alice, having tired of Roger, whose idea of passion is to discuss *L'Avventura* over instant coffee, falls in love with a handsome philosopher who fobs her off with his best friend, Finn Anderson.

We have had one sharp change of tone, from the slow, subtle, richly painted childhood into a sharper, more satirical novel of university life. Now, with Alice's marriage to Finn and her reconciling of sense ("Mother. Kitchen. Bread. Husband. Work. Good, honest safe used words") with sensuality ("Words that raged and flowered like sunsets"), the book changes again. This is the story of mature Alice, a successful feminist poet, travelling alone to give a poetry reading and being raped (silently, willingly) by a stranger on the night train. On the journey home she meets the man again and finds in him a familiar, an alter-ego. At school he was the boy she stared beside and loved one dazzling summer sports day. Later, he was the friend's husband she might have loved, the man in the street she seemed to know. Like a friend, he comes into the train compartment to listen to her life-story, and like a ghost he vanishes, is said never to have been there.

In all three phases, as three quite different books, *Sense and Sensuality* works. As a skilfully twined kaleidoscope of childhood memories and impressions, it is outstanding. As a university novel, it is shrewd and funny. As a study of the problems of being a leading feminist poet and a devoted wife and mother, it is intelligent and good-humoured. The fault lies in the impossible task Brackenbury has set herself of sheltering three stories so different in style and feeling under one umbrella. Alice Linnell succeeds at last in reconciling the conflict between sense and sensuality, and in making of them a composite whole; her creator falls just short of that achievement.

Drive, he said

Michael Hofmann

SAM SHEPARD
Motel Chronicles and Hawk Moon
188pp. Faber. Paperback, £3.95.
0571 134580

The two books that comprise this volume may both be collections of poems and short prose, but in other respects there is a wide difference between them. *Hawk Moon* is the older work, its stories are more solidly stories, fantastic amalgams of hallucination, pioneer "tall tales", Indian ritual, ghost stories, comic books and so forth. They are wild, showy, addled and implausible. Occasionally they contain an image that is memorable without being gruesome: "Then he saw a yellow flag with a green maple leaf raise itself slowly on the flag pole and burn itself up when it hit the top." The poems, always less persuasive than the prose, are often exercises in association and rhythm: "Sacred / Night / Moon / Sacred / Light / New / Like a man / Precious / Time / Precious / Few / Worship the animal / The animal / You".

Twice the length of *Hawk Moon*, of greater authenticity and far more interest are the *Motel Chronicles*. Here the items are fragmentary and personal – not the finished stories of *Hawk Moon*, with their trick- or big-bang endings. Instead of a title, each one bears the date and place of its composition: from 1978 to 1982, and a whole series of addresses, mostly in the south west of the United States. The documentary atmosphere is reinforced by eight photographs showing Shepard, his father (?), a commune-type group, and shots of cars and garages. The photographer is nicely named Johnny Dark. The seventy-odd pieces of writing are in no particular order. They lie where they fell, like the man in one of them who is roughed up in his motel room, and is told, "You ever mess with Virgie again, I'll kill ya!"

But often the *Motel Chronicles* are no such thing. The first one is an early memory of Shepard's: sucking ice-cubes to numb the pain of teething, driving through the Badlands with his mother, at night, and stopping under some huge lit-up plaster dinosaurs. It ends:

We weaved slowly in and out through the dinosaurs. Through their legs. Under their bellies. Crawling the Bronosaurs. Staring up at the teeth of the Tyrannosaurs Rex. They all had these little blue lights for eyes. There were no people around. Just us and the dinosaurs.

The scene is modern and absurd – but it takes no pleasure in being either. "They all had these little blue lights for eyes." There is nothing literary about it, no celebration, no message, no ambition, no craft. But for all its roughness and studied unawareness, it has some of the tenderness of a man dealing with something small – though Shepard wouldn't like to admit it: "baby" and "babyhood" are hundreds of miles away.

"Just us and the dinosaurs." The tone is always as contained or as stifled as this; there is never anything to take it out of itself, into humour or meaning or faith or clamour or any kind of kinesia. Even the capitalization of some of the nouns is only a dumb reverence, respect tempered by unease. There is something fetishistic about it, endowing objects with magical or divine power: not only the names of cars and cigarettes, but the various functions on a film-shoot, birds, trees and drinks. On the way to a filming-session:

two semis passed with the words HOBBS MIRACLE REVIVAL CRUSADE in bold red letters painted on the sides. He wondered who the drivers were, if they believed in God or if they were just driving for others who believed in God.

This scepticism is too slow and too uncertain to become humour, but it shows Shepard as a small letter among the majuscules, somewhere between irregularity and disorder, unbelief and a readiness to believe. The Dinosaurs, the HOBBS semis, the Roosters and the Giant Blue Gum Eucalyptus are all gathered like evidence, sacred objects that no longer conduct anywhere beyond themselves, though they litter the landscapes of these writings.

But the most fetishized – the most godlike – objects in *Motel Chronicles* are the cars. They are numerous in themselves – the '59 red Impala, the early Austin Healey – and they confer freedom. But of the many journeys in the

book, few have any designated purpose: they are all journeys away from somewhere else; "one is always nearer by not keeping still". But not only is driving an oddly stationary activity ("Driving alone is mainly just sitting and moving with the road. A stationary kind of act but the car keeps moving while you sit still and your feet fall asleep"), it also seems to entail an equal and opposite sense of paralysis. There is a striking contrast between the road-pieces and a handful that seem to involve resuscitating a dead relationship with a girl, indifferent, disabled, aphasic: "I rubbed her neck. It felt like wood. She made a sound. I asked her something else but she was incapable of words." There are fifteen almost unbearable pages of an account of a woman's brain haemorrhage, and a poem (set and sung by John Cale as "If You Were Still Around") in which love is indistinguishable from cruelty:

I'd turn you
Facing the wind
Bend your spine on my knee
Chew the back of your head
Till you opened your mouth to this life

Against such a desperately unresponsive background, the actions of the lone driver look more than ever like religious ceremonies:

I opened my Rand McNally Road Map on the bed and started at the state of Wyoming. I ran my finger down the Big Horn Mountain Range.

The next morning I was gone.

Idea-dramas

Galen Strawson

REBECCA GOLDSTEIN
The Mind-Body Problem
275pp. André Deutsch. £7.95.
0233 977279

Philosophical problems are often difficult because they are unclear. Part of the problem is: what is the problem? But the mind-body problem is very clear, as clear as it is difficult. There is mind; there is body (or matter). What is the relation between them? This is Renee Feuer's problem in *The Mind-Body Problem*. At first she studies it mainly with her mind. She studies it in the classroom, in the library, in the graduate school at Princeton University. Then she studies it mainly in her body. She studies it in the sexual field, with Jack Gottlieb (math, graduate), Peter Devon (epicene musicologist, Wasp), Leonard Heiss (man of letters, bisexual), Noam Himmel (husband, genius), Leonard Schmerz (math, "His face was the history of the Jews") and Daniel Korper (physicist, Yekky or German Jew: "Let's see if this anal little Yekky has any balls, I said to myself").

Renee's own mind and body are good. She is attractive and she gets straight As. But she is dissatisfied, she is insecure; she is dogged by a Jewish Orthodox upbringing and foxed by a mind-body crosswalk of guilt and sensuality. She is mentally clever and physically beautiful and what she really wants is true love with someone physically clever (in bed) and mentally beautiful (a genius, preferably). Her friend Ava Schwarz has it right: "The problem with you, Renee, is that you think the male sexual organ is the brain." And by the brain, Ava means the mind.

And so it is that Renee falls for Noam Himmel, the ageing *Wunderkind*, the "blazing star who had first burst upon the mathematical heavens in 1950 at the age of twelve with his brilliant seminal paper 'On the Properties of Supernatural Numbers'". Now there are all sorts of ways of classifying numbers. There are the countable naturals, the uncountable reals, the rationals, the irrationals and the surds; the imaginaries, the transcendental and the trans-finites. Georg Cantor discovered the trans-finites – he proved that there is more than one infinite number. But Noam Himmel discovered the *transfinites*, the *supernaturals*, "numbers so big they are used for collections too large to form sets. How can there be such numbers? And yet there are" – the Himmel numbers. Himmel had proved them. Such is math. Himmel is understandably irresistible to Renee, who duly makes herself irresistible to him. She becomes the wife of a genius. And

The demon of debauchery

E. S. Turner

QUENTIN BELL
The Brandon Papers
214pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press. £8.95.
07011 28569

Quentin Bell's last book was *Techniques of Terracotta*, the readers of which may not have suspected that the Emeritus Professor of Sussex University, nephew of Virginia Woolf, chronicler of Bloomsbury, painter, sculptor and potter, nourished a gamy demon in his breast. *The Brandon Papers* is a bare-faced "literary find", promising "fraud, perversion and homicide" in a late Victorian setting. To disperse any misconceptions, the author gives his word on page one that no Woolfs will make an appearance.

Hesketh Pearson, we are unreliably informed, made some "preliminary studies" of the Brandon annals. Authorities include the "monumental study" by Professor Elise P. Dawson, 480 pages of socio-medical jargon, strenuously misinformed; an account of the family by a kinswoman, Maria Hattershall, who wrote three bad novels a year; various statements by an over-experienced French maid; and – the main source – an unpublished autobiographical novel by the fishy Lady Bran-

don, whose style displays "a sufficiently curious mixture of exhibitionism and reticence".

There is an audacious surprise about a third of the way through, which inhibits the reviewer (this reviewer, anyway) from giving any clear account of the plot. It is a tale of inheritance and impersonation with much of the Victorian penny dreadful about it: there are wicked baronets; there is even a Gothic castle on the ice-bound coast of Labrador, built by Sir Amos Porthow on the fringe of a large township designed for duping investors. Here he incarcerates his second wife, who is a murderer, along with a not-greatly-wanted daughter.

The time comes when the daughter has to be groomed for the grand life. Her lady mentor arrives bearing a prohibited list of "the foulest expressions in the language compiled by the firm of Mellish and Barker (solicitors) with some assistance from a naval friend". This is necessary because the daughter, judging by her letters, has picked up words like "sod", which was apparently current among servants in Labrador a century ago. But she learns quickly and soon her "painful tirocinium" is over.

Most of the action now takes place in England and has to do with the hazards of maintaining an impersonation. Perverts begin to close in. Will there be a union of the Nero-Sporus type? The narrative is coolly tongue-in-cheek, with the wildest improbabilities glossed over; but the scene at a Brighton villa in which vicious servants, all drunk, are entertained by a whip-flourishing baronet to a display of sodomy sits uncomfortably within a literary jape. Indeed, at this point a tale which began with a taste of Gentlemen's Relish gives off a whiff like that of very rank peanut butter.

Fortunately, victims recover quickly from the grossest ordeals. The unwilling participant in the Brighton debauch is cut loose, sits quietly for a few moments, snatches a chicken and a bottle of wine, retires to bed and is up again at five, ready with an elaborate plot for vengeance.

Out of evil comes some good. Sir Amos's dubious wealth is illegally diverted into the Brandonian Institute, which one expects to see unmasked as some sort of seminary for the damned, but which turns out to be a bona fide medical research centre. It is a place where, to quote the dread Professor Dawson, Lady Brandon is able "to totally reject patriarchal values in favour of a maternalistic philosophy of healing . . . to comprehend on a higher plane of existentiality the true character of both maladies and therapeutic concepts".

How would Aunt Virginia, so thoughtfully excluded from the cast, have enjoyed this moral tale? We know that, back in the 1930s, she regarded her nephew (and future biographer) as mature and sensible; he has certainly come on a bit since then. She would have to agree that he has his special brand of fun, a clever way with a plot and a knack for writing the dissimulating or inflated prose current at that period (Maria Hattershall refers to the Labrador lot as "prisoners . . . of the sempiternal frost").

Aunt Virginia would certainly have been impressed by the jacket painting of Lady Brandon: "Harmony in Blue and Silver" . . . attributed to James McNeill Whistler by Professor Bell, courtesy of the Brandonian Institute."

DOUGLAS CLARK
Dead Letter
207pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0575 03517X

The statement on the front of the dust-jacket of Douglas Clark's latest book, that in the course of it Masters and Green, his inseparable pair from Scotland Yard, take a Mediterranean holiday, is totally erroneous. In fact, they spend most of their time trying to track down the author of a cryptic pseudonymous letter who claims to be one of Green's old Eighth Army mates. This then leads to some undercover work on the South Coast, camouflaged by the presence of wives and offspring: which allows the author far too much freedom to indulge in his penchant for the description of domestic trivia. But the plot, as always, is tight and neat, and the Desert Rat reminiscences full of interest.

T. J. D.

John Melmoth

JULIAN EVANS (Editor)
Foreign Exchange
215pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95 (paperback, £3.50).
0241 14888

One of the under-reported phenomena of "Mrs Thatcher's Britain" is an apparently insatiable appetite for travel writing. The memoirs of those impecunious Victorian ladies who, without adjusting their dresses, penetrated darkest Africa and frightened the cannibals are outsid only by the jaundiced observations of minor poets who poked sniffily around the Aegean and the Far East after the First World War. The operative principle would seem to be: the farther away the better. This burst of escapism tends, however, to obscure the fact that "abroad" plays two principal roles in English fiction. It is the place where preconceptions are paraded topos, where an inherited suspiciousness of pleasure ceases to operate: and it is the focus of the crassest xenophobia, inhabited by foreigners variously despised and pined for their remoteness from the pallid Anglo-Saxon norm.

The travel stories in *Foreign Exchange* do not promote either stereotype. Foreign parts prove as unprepossessing as our own; the natives are conspicuously neither guilt-free nor earthy and spontaneous. The collection operates the kind of cultural relativism that reduces everything to the unremarkable; it might almost be read as an argument for staying at home.

Carlo Gébier's "Puerto Vallarta", set in Mexico, goes through the motions of the travelogue (Spanish voices "mutter darkly", trees are "suggestive of the jungle") before indulging a health inspector's fastidiousness about flies and shit in the streets. "La Plume de mon ami" by Rose Tremain is paradoxically rigorous in following the conventions for introducing adolescence to French food, "Italian architectural caprice" and "the lavender sunsets" of Provence. Landscape is casually subordinated to myth rather than closely observed: "The Rhone is slow, majestic and green as the Amazon"; all rivers are one river. "The Blind Man Eats Many Flies" by David Profumo dutifully remarks the bathetic contrast between modern Corfu and its ancient culture and speculates on the impact of the successive invasions of Ottomans, Venetians, Britons and Italians. Only to be brought up abruptly by the incomprehensibility of Corfu's notions of propriety. Michel Deon's "Umbrian Afternoon" makes reference to

Stendhal's *Voyage en Italie* and inserts a wedge between being and being written about. The closest the people of Varela get to a sense of their authenticity is the knowledge that their town has featured in a guide to the region.

Few of the contributors seem willing to risk the trip from the particular to the general. Travel writing, as they practise it, is a matter of accumulating the details of architecture, topography and food that constitute not-here-ness. One of Michel Deon's characters even argues that "if you want to get to know a country and love it, first of all you have to taste everything it has to offer".

Colin Thubron's "The Ear" is stronger on the way Leningrad looks – "the palaces and terraced mansions stand, serenely unglving in pastel yellow, blue or tangerine" – than on the religious dissidence that it fosters. The most engaging piece, "L'Amour" by Clare Boylan, invigorates an old gag by recording the cuisine shock of an English kid expected to eat *escar-*

Summer asperities

Patricia Craig

GRACE GOLDBY
Across the Water
182pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
07181 25142

Across the Water is set in Co Fermanagh; a pair of very ornate gates is mentioned in the opening line, and beyond them we soon get a view of a Big House whose upkeep hasn't been attended to. At this Big House live Dada and Boyle, the former, for some reason, speaking like a Co Fermanagh cowman, and the latter not much less colloquial in spite of an English education. An ex-schoolfellow, Mark, now an officer with the British Army, turns up at this spot in Fermanagh in pursuit of a local sectarian killer. The person promptly arrested for the murder of a neighbour is a boy named Sean; of whom Boyle has allowed himself to become too fond.

Meanwhile, in London, Boyle's brother Desmond has arranged for the transfer of his wife and son to his father's lakeside house: it is 1976, and the heat of the summer is getting everyone down. Desmond is a playwright; his wife Aimee, unable to see the point of the theatre, arrives unprotesting in Fermanagh with her young son Jack. She finds Boyle odd and annoying, Dada too better, and Mark, the English soldier, irresistible. Soon Desmond decides to join his family and arrives with a BBC associate and camera crew who plan to do

gots, langoustes, pâté de grives, culasses de grenouilles, fole gras and "the veal of imprisoned calves". When Nicholas Wollaston is not ruminating on "the ancient and infinite life" of the jungles of Africa, Vietnam, Laos and the Himalayas, his "Walkabout" is excellent on the crystalline light and water of the Solomon archipelago.

What *Foreign Exchange* makes clear is that these things can be a cinch. The act of naming proves irresistible: myrtle, cypress, olive and bougainvillea effortlessly evoke the Mediterranean. Place names have a special ability to speak for themselves. Rose Tremain's suggestion that the Loire Valley is the obvious and ideal place to reaffirm one's remoteness from "the modern . . . the utilitarian and the plebian" is not immediately convincing. What is plain, however, is that the names Blois, Chambord, Avignon, Vienne, Valence and Montellmar work their own surreptitious and elusive effects.

a programme on prehistoric stone-carving in the district. The tone of the script for this programme has a bad effect on Boyle, who considers it whimsical. "Sure it's crap altogether."

By now we have had a fire in the garden, with the destruction of some rhododendron bushes and the further dilapidation of the gates as a fire engine arrives in a hurry; adultery; some off-stage deaths; a lot of domestic bickering; and the deterioration of Aimee's manners and Boyle's equanimity, to say nothing of Desmond's ability to stay amiable without a drink. Boyle, who is having letters from Crumlin Road gaol delivered by hand, is eventually found looked in the sitting room crying over a blue tit dispatched by the cat. You can't, as far as all these characters are concerned, call it a tension-free summer.

What strikes you immediately about this novel (Grace Goldby's first) is the peculiar manner in which it's written. There are no commas where you expect to find them, and an abundance of commas whenever some other form of punctuation seems called for. You find distinct echoes of Henry Green – "Really!" she said exasperated – a writer whose unerring eccentricities do not on the whole transplant very well. Grace Goldby doesn't convey a strong sense of the Fermanagh setting, or the things that go on there. Her dialect isn't always spot on; or correctly allocated. However, she deserves credit for avoiding banality; for the asperity in her view of people's social relations; and for the ease with which she handles her preposterous ending.

The fruits of despair

Hugh Brigstocke

ELIZABETH CROPPER

The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa's Düsseldorf Notebook
288pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£86.60.
0691 040214

Elizabeth Cropper's long-awaited study of the life and thought of Pietro Testa, an artist from Lucca who for a time worked in the circle of Nicolas Poussin in Rome, is "neither a conventional monograph devoted to an artist's work, nor is it a contribution to the history of art theory considered in isolation from artistic practice". The view of Testa propounded by Professor Cropper is based largely on hitherto unpublished material which was bound together soon after his death in 1650 and is now to be found with the artist's notes and drawings, in the Kunstmuseum in Düsseldorf. It is neither a treatise nor a sketchbook but "a gathering of fragmentary notes on different subjects made at different moments in Testa's life". The second part of Cropper's formidable endeavour consists of a complete transcription of the Düsseldorf notebook together with a scholarly commentary outlining Testa's literary sources, but regrettably without translation.

Testa's suicide at the age of thirty-eight, following an unhappy career, has inspired various modern interpretations. Many writers, from Lucia Lopresti to Francis Haskell, have characterized the artist as a proto-romantic at odds with his intellect. His spontaneous creativity, expressed in neo-Venetian style, was undermined by his exposure to classicist theories in Rome and by his intense study of ancient art from within the circle of Poussin's mentor, the Roman antiquarian Cassiano dal Pozzo. More recently (*Münchener Jahrbuch* 1978) Testa has been characterized as an inventive and imaginative graphic artist who had the misfortune to be active in Rome at a time when the mark of success was held to be mastery of large-scale fresco decoration. Within the sheltered environment of dal Pozzo's understanding patronage, he had been stimulated to produce his most atmospheric and romantic mythological landscapes. His unwillingness to become reconciled to the special but restricted nature of his own talent led him to escape from protection in order to accept unsuitable commissions for large-scale altarpieces and fresco decorations.

Cropper now brushes aside suggestions that Testa's failure may have been due primarily to a temperamental crisis reflected in stylistic change, or even to embittered frustration arising from misplaced ambitions. She attributes it instead to "unresolvable intellectual despair" and, from the evidence of the Düsseldorf notebooks, puts forward a view of Testa's life as a rational one, stressing his intellectual and emotional consistency both in his writing and in his art.

The paintings, prints and drawings of the artist's early period, c1632-37, are here no longer portrayed as romantic, nostalgic poems in a neo-Venetian idiom. For "if Testa, like Poussin, studied Titian directly", Cropper suggests, he did this in the context of the larger issue of the nature of poetic invention, of the ways in which simple themes from Ovid or Plautus, for example, could be embellished to give them new meaning, rather than in the terms of a general taste for "neo-Venetian" style. Titian's inventions offered guidance in the debate about the difference between fable, allegory and history, but any notion of a general neo-Venetian movement in a purely eclectic sense is meaningless.

The new intellectual thrust of Testa's work from the late 1630s onwards is dramatically illustrated by the large etchings of *The Seasons*, especially "Summer" and "Winter" which Cropper finds "without rival in painted philosophy or as images of the artist's soul". However, it is the slightly earlier etching, "Il Leo della pittura" of c1637, dedicated to the Lucchese Cardinal Buonvisi, that provides the central clue for our understanding of Testa as a cerebral artist, inasmuch as it expresses in visual symbols the ideas that he recorded in his notes for the Treatise. He considered theory to be inseparable from artistic practice, and his Treatise was intended therefore for the practical education of the artist, and not as a work of purely historical or aesthetic interest. His art and writings, if taken seriously, would thus appear to contradict Denis Mahon's belief (*Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, 1947), that theory in seventeenth-century Italy was

above all "literary and interpretative, rather than artistic and creative". Testa's intention was to define artistic practice as a habit of the intellect and to find a way of liberating personal style within the classical artistic tradition. He envisaged a process in which the artist would progressively acquire intellectual freedom and critical independence. This would be attained through the judicious imitation of nature and art, the mastery of mathematics and study of the elements, and the analysis and application of chiaroscuro and the organization of colour values.

Yet both as a writer and as a practising painter, Testa failed ignominiously to realize his ambitions. Unable to reconcile his idea of the free judgment of the artist guiding the chariot of reason, with his own faltering attempts to show how a balanced view might be acquired through a clear programme of study, he never completed the Treatise. The difficulty, as Cropper has diagnosed, arose from his recognition that "the judgments of individual genius may find many paths to the truth, which are afterwards verifiable by an appeal to reason, but to prescribe one or another particular path is self-defeating".

But Testa's greatest misfortune was that he could not paint. He was therefore incapable of applying many of the precepts of his writings, especially those relating to chiaroscuro and colour, to his own canvases. And his failure is cruelly exposed by Poussin's brilliant achievements in tackling these very same problems in relatively small-scale paintings. Both artists had obviously studied the same Leonardo manuscripts, edited by Zaccolli, yet there is no painting by Testa to match the systematic application of shadow projection in Poussin's "Eucharist" (painted for dal Pozzo) or his "Rebecca and Eliezer" (painted for Pointel) or even in his numerous wash drawings, where relief is obtained without outline or

Agents of antiquarianism

Edward Chaney

EDWARD L. GOLDBERG
Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage
425pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£46.40.
0691 040192

Few if any significant patterns emerge from *Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage*, nor does it deal with "patronage" so much as with collecting, which, as Ernst Gombrich pointed out in his essay on early Medici patronage, is not quite the same thing. Edward L. Goldberg has, however, most effectively described and documented the mechanics of Medici manipulation of a team of talented agents who were strategically placed in the major Italian cities and were adept at acquiring medals, sculpture, paintings and drawings ever more selectively on an ever-shrinking budget. Presiding over the two parts of the book are, respectively, Cardinal Leopoldo and his nephew Cosimo III. Chronologically organized, these parts are subdivided into more or less self-contained case studies dealing with, among other topics, the Venetian agency of Paolo del Sera, the half-hearted patronage of the ill-fated female artist, Elisabetta Sirani, and the not very grand Grand-ducal Academy in Rome. Gone were the days described by Botero in his *Ragion di Stato* when "no state ever had so much ready money". In January 1686, Cosimo's *segretario di stato* wrote to the Tuscan Resident in Rome that

The Most Serene Patron is in no way disposed to test his purse against that of the King of France in the purchase of the pictures which he brings sold by the House of Barberini. Therefore, he thinks rather of standing back and observing the capacity of the others. It is true, however, that there are clearly identified portraits of artists by their own hand among those paintings. His Highness would take them.

The fear of competing with the likes of Louis XIV or, worse still, of being outbid by a *nouveau riche* Englishman, limited the Medici to consolidating existing collections or to creating specialized ones. The positive results of this careful antiquarianism, the business side of which was often, in Professor Goldberg's words, "ruthlessly bourgeois in tone", are to be seen today in the galleries of the Uffizi and Palazzo Pitti. The collection of self-portraits



Pietro Testa's study for the decoration of the apse of S. Martino ai Monti, Rome, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

contour through the logical ordering of chiaroscuro. Paradoxically, it is from her study of Testa's recognition that painting is fundamentally optical in nature, that Cropper has arrived at an excellent understanding of Poussin as a painter of colour and light who, contrary to received opinion, never distinguished between the limits of *disegno* and *colore*.

In his own vocabulary he was unable to escape from the traditional philosophical association of colour with music and with rhetoric, especially as he was concerned with the effect of a painting and its subject on the emotions of the judicious spectator. But in his painting, and indeed his drawings, he shows his awareness of the slow revolution being effected in his day, through which colour was being liberated from its status as a sort of tinted skin adhering to the form to be considered instead as a property of light, governed by physical laws.

Although Testa was overshadowed by Poussin's inimitable genius, he did nevertheless finally establish his own artistic identity, through the brilliance of his invention as an etcher. In his late

print "The Death of Cato" (1648), Testa not only demonstrates his own mastery of mathematics and shadow projection, but also attains a new language of expression in his approach to narrative. As Cropper perceptively explains, Whereas Poussin shows every participant reacting to the main event in a way that serves to clarify the spectator's reading of it, Testa makes the *affetto* part of the event itself. His meditations on the meaning of a kind of Stoic virtue, in which the affections are suppressed, transcend the narrative. In this way Testa comments upon the value of representation itself as a means of persuasion.

Within its modest format, "The Death of Cato" is a masterpiece, and this work alone strongly suggests that Testa, two years before his untimely death, remained in command of his intellect and with a capacity for profound artistic vision. Yet even today the collector can still buy many of Testa's etchings for less than half the price of *The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa's Düsseldorf Notebook*.

exclusive dependence on a single public archive, the Archivio di Stato at Florence, and within that on correspondence with Venice, Bologna and Rome at the expense of documents dealing with purely domestic patronage. Even within the Archivio di Stato, research among the Carte Stroziane might have enabled him to broaden his scope while a few hundred yards away in the Biblioteca Nazionale, the Palatini manuscripts contain much unexplored late-seventeenth-century material on scholarly and artistic matters.

The potential of private archives is suggested by a letter of 1645 (now on sale in Caldini's bookshop in the Via Tornabuoni) written by Leopoldo to Orazio Rucellai about a Guido Reni and a Guercino that he was trying to acquire in Bologna for his Casino. The contents of this letter argue against the formative influence Goldberg attributes to the journey to Rome which Leopoldo made in 1650 in the company of his elder brother Mattias. In terms of influence, one might have expected Leopoldo's elder brother, Cardinal Gian Carlo, patron of Pietro da Cortona and Salvator Rosa, to have featured more prominently in a book of this title. Equally, some account of Grand Prince Ferdinand III's no less enterprising patronage would have nicely rounded off the survey.

In the end, the book's major fault would seem to be its failure to live up to its title. Apart from the inadequacy of its index, which only half-heartedly covers the footnotes (more than a third of the book's bulk), there is little else to complain of. As a Roman Catholic priest who spent twenty-two years in exile, the Medici librarian and medal expert, Peter Fitton, would have been distressed to find himself described as "an Anglo-Catholic", and Joseph Addison would have been indignant that he could survive from typescript through proofs and into print as John. But *Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage* offers innumerable insights into the late seventeenth century via a rich field of expertly edited material.

Heinrich Wölfflin's *Renaissance and Baroque*, described by the author in his preface to the original German edition of 1888 as a study of "the disintegration of the Renaissance", has been reissued in a new translation by Kathrin Simon (183pp. Collins. Paperback, £3.95, 000-217-349-2).

Trusting the Baroque

Winton Dean

MICHAEL COLLINS and ELISE K. KIRK
(Editors)

Opera and Vivaldi
398pp. University of Texas Press, distributed by Brown (Trevor) Associates. £35.
0292 707460

Opera and Vivaldi has ambitious aims: to explore the literary, philosophical, historical, theatrical and musical background, and the performance practice, not only of Vivaldi's operas but of Baroque opera *seria* as a whole. The importance of the subject needs no emphasis. Revivals of opera *seria* are multiplying rapidly, but there is little common ground in style and approach, partly because the historical evidence has (till very recently) been inadequately studied, and partly because of a persistent suspicion that the form offers meagre sustenance to the wider modern public. Handel has not established himself in repertory; what case can be made for Vivaldi as a great (or a typical) composer of opera *seria*?

The twenty contributions offered here, the substance of a symposium held in connection with the first American stage performance of a Vivaldi opera (*Orlando*) at Dallas in November 1980, vary widely in scholarship, accuracy and relevance. They begin ominously with a lusty puff of the Dallas production, complete with quotations from the press, and of the symposium itself. It soon becomes clear that the former, imported from Verona, was the sort of compromise bound to cripple the cause it was designed to foster, with heavy cuts, insertions from other works, octave transposition of a male part, and an orchestra of fifty including an incongruous organ. An unnecessary change of title introduces further confusion: Vivaldi was responsible for three Orlando operas, all derived from Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso*, but the score of 1727 on which the Dallas production was based did not bear that title. Some of this tangled history is explained in an appendix, with a synopsis, which would have come better at the beginning of the book.

The literary and theoretical background is covered by several authors, almost to the point of saturation, though C. Peter Brand draws timely attention to theatrical elements in Ariosto. Gary Schmidgall spoils a thoughtful essay with inaccuracies: a typical opera *seria* does not last anything like five or six hours, and if he cannot hum or whistle "Ombra mai fu" or "Verdi prati", what can he hum or whistle? Ellen Rosand gives a good account of the few seventeenth-century Ariosto operas, but Ellen T. Harris goes wildly astray over those of the eighteenth century, trying to force them into watertight categories, misrepresenting the plot of Handel's *Orlando* and cluttering the landscape with fallacies and unsupported assertions. The statement that in these librettos "the story of Orlando's madness was treated as heroic, comic, or pastoral, but never as a mixture" is almost an inversion of the truth.

William C. Holmes on Venetian theatres, William L. Barcham on stage costume and Shirley Wynne on deportment and gesture are all excellent, with helpful illustrations, though Barcham perhaps allows too little weight to the deliberate exaggeration in Zanetti's caricatures. Eleanor Selfridge-Field unearths some contemporary operatic "criticism" – not criticism in any recognizable sense but a useful and little-known sidelight. The section on performance practice is much more erratic, apart from Howard Mayer Brown's judicious treatment of vocal cadenzas. He educates a practical set of rules from contemporary writers and adds fresh information from an unpublished manuscript in Chicago. Roger Covell makes heavy weather of voice registers; his attempt to tabulate the sort of parts allotted to each voice is often misleading. Michael Collins on recitative cadences revives an old confusion between the obligatory *appoggiatura* and the ornamental *acclamazione*, ignores the crucial evidence that the cadential chords were played as written, and assumes without authority that recitatives in Mozart's time were taken much faster than in Vivaldi's. Mary Cyr crosses some of the same ground, with illuminating quotations from many authors (notably correspondence between Grün and Telemann), but distinguishes too little between French and Italian

recitative and sometimes, like Covell and Collins, relies on obsolete information.

No clear picture emerges of Vivaldi's operatic achievement. Eric Cross's analysis of his style is excellent as far as it goes; but the points to which he draws attention, whether in recitative, scoring (where Vivaldi was a master), harmonic rhythm, aria design or occasional breaks with convention, are found in others, notably Handel. We need to hear and see a Vivaldi opera uncontaminated before we can estimate its overall dramatic thrust and control of characterization, and perhaps dispel the impression that it contains too many fast arias of similar cut with the voice treated as a concertizing instrument. Two writers deal with self-borrowings. Knus Kropfinger presses some suggestive evidence a little too far; John Walter Hill in a stimulating essay on the three *Orlando operas* shows ingeniously how borrowings may be detected from the text when the music is lost. Two of the most pertinent contributions come at the end of the book. Alan Curtis, dealing with the preparation of a performance or an edition, asks: "Why is it that opera managements always seek a specialist to make a certain kind of wig, to coach fencing, or to provide laser-beam lighting, yet when they choose a Baroque opera, they often ask advice of someone who has little real knowledge, interest or experience in opera before Mozart – or before Verdi for that matter?" Andrew Porter, impatient at seeing the same mistakes made over and over again, not least in the Dallas *Orlando*, insists that we trust the composers as we trust Verdi or Wagner. That is the only way to understand them; it is also the best way to enjoy them.

Masterworks of monody

Daniel Leech-Wilkinson

GIULIO CATTIN
Music of the Middle Ages I
Translated by Steven Botterill
246pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50
(paperback, £8.95).
0521 241618

Until very recently, music historians have taken for granted that plainchant provided the point of departure for polyphonic music in the West. Histories of music, and especially histories of medieval music, have traditionally allotted several early chapters to the development of chant, its function within the medieval liturgy, and the forms and styles in which it is found in surviving manuscripts. But however generous the treatment, the reader is often left with the impression that plainchant is of little musical interest aside from its qualities as an evocative accompaniment to religious meditation, and that it is to be valued today only as the precursor of polyphony.

It is refreshing – if, to the secular reader, a little disconcerting – to find in Giulio Cattin an author who believes plainchant to be the superior medium. In this survey – first published in 1979 as part of a multi-volume Italian history of music – polyphony is briskly "assigned to another volume (by F. A. Gallo) in order not to disrupt the unity of the present treatment". And Fr Cattin has no hesitation in ascribing to the growth of polyphony the decline and corruption of the classical repertory of chant. The reader is left in little doubt not only that he would welcome the restoration of chant to its classical state but that he would also gladly see the reintroduction of those later forms – tropes, sequences, metrical offices and liturgical dramas – which disappeared after the Council of Trent. For him, that entire corpus represents sacred music at its highest point of development.

It is consistent with this view to see chant scholarship, in labouring with infinite patience towards a restoration of the sacred text, as being too important for the author to allow himself to ignore, for the sake of the reader, the many differences of methodology and opinion which it encompasses. Cattin's approach is rather to lay out the main viewpoints of the different scholars involved, and to suggest to the reader which of these is to be preferred. The book is thus more a summary of recent scholarly activity than an attempt to

Multiperspectival remarks

Michael Tanner

HERBERT LINDENBERGER
Opera: The extravagant art
297pp. Cornell University Press. £25.
08014 16981

At last, a serious book on opera. Both the title and the cover might suggest that it belongs to the feather-brained breed of *My Mad, Mad World of Opera*, but a glance at the contents shows that it is a theoretical study, much concerned with genres, and the carefully balanced chapters' headings indicate that *Critical Inquiry* would be a natural place for their début, though in fact it wasn't. Herbert Lindenberg indicates his ambitions in the preface, hoping "to renew that significant line of operatic criticism extending from Wagner and Hanslick through Nietzsche and Shaw to such recent commentators as Theodor Adorno, Joseph Kerman, and Carl Dahlhaus". A slightly surprising list – why is Hanslick there? – and yet those writers all had in common a commitment to strong preferences, based on a more or less worked-out view of what opera can best do, what its role in society is or might be, and what dangers constantly threaten its integrity.

By comparison with them, Lindenberg is a bystander, obviously fascinated by the phenomenon of opera and familiar with the chief works of the repertoire. But he can't be said to have a general view of it, apart from its "extravagance", and certainly not a prescriptive one. I noticed only two value-judgments in the book, one of them a welcome "great" ap-

plied to Machado de Assis's novel *Dom Casimiro* (shortly to be reissued by the Hogarth Press). The extravagance consists partly of the larger-than-life aspects of opera production, the characters of the great singers, and so on. But it is also, and more importantly, built into the theoretical structure of the book, which Lindenberg describes as "multiperspectival", and which he promises will use and extend "structuralist narrative analysis... Bakhtin's theory of generic interchange... that discipline which Adorno called *Musiksoziologie*". And he does use those methods, though no one should feel intimidated; the book is jargon-free and clearly written. Open it at random and you are almost certain to come across a reasonably interesting remark, often supported by a footnote (and it is a cause for gratitude that they are foot and not back-notes).

In fact that's the best way to read it. For in spite of the elaborate structure of the book, one has a growing sense as one reads on that, as so often with genre-studies, it is not getting anywhere. Multiperspectival it may be, but Lindenberg fails to use the different perspectives on one another. So one is left with scrupulous accounts of how, for instance, many of the great novelists have taken their characters for a night at the opera, which gives them (the great novelists) a chance to point up the artificiality of the emotions portrayed on stage in contrast with those of the spectators, or the lack of glamour in the lives of the spectators in contrast with those of the characters on the stage, or our old enemy "ironic juxtaposition". True enough, but does it matter?

At the beginning of Chapter Two Lindenberg sets up an opposition between "operatic" which he associates "with such terms as historicism, extravagant, gestural, ceremonial, and performative", and "verbal", linked to "such terms as literary, restrained, referential, mimetic". Those are tendentious lists, but it is a familiar kind of procedure, familiar enough for the reader to be alert to its dangers. Once one has set up such categories there is not much to do but trudge through the history of opera, showing the ways in which many works fit into them, and others don't, the renegades providing telling counter-examples. Thus "Debussy's understatement in *Pelléas* represents a commentary upon the Wagnerian mode" – but that's something we all knew, to the extent that it's true. We also knew that what at one time is a living convention ossifies, and becomes a bore, without having Bakhtin's heavyweight authority invoked. On the other hand, we didn't know that "the notorious *Tristan* chord... became a musical cliché in well less than thirty years after it stunned its first listeners", because that isn't true; where are all the subsequent uses that would reduce it to a cliché to be found? The intense chromaticism that characterizes *Tristan* certainly was over-used by Wagner's successors and imitators, but not the chord.

But that slip is not typical of this scrupulous book. The general level of accuracy is strikingly high (though Lindenberg twice repeats the now exploded claim made by Wagner that it was hearing Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient play *Leonore* in *Fidelio* that inspired him to become a composer of operas; *Fidelio* was not performed in Leipzig in 1829). It contains many facts. But their organization into exciting and illuminating, if controversial, patterns does not occur, so one has to savour them for their own sake. Not only did I not get a single new insight into an individual work from this book, but it hasn't led me to think harder about any aspect of the phenomenon of opera. Lindenberg is fatally free of prejudices, bias, partisanship – essential ingredients for critical writing of value.

The LITERARY REVIEW

Fall 1984: An interview with Russell Hoban, new poems by 50 poets, fiction, articles on James Wright, David Wagoner, Gerald Stern.

Winter 1985: Contemporary Italian Literature in Translation – new work from Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, Alberto Moravia, Alberto Gulliani, and others.

285 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ USA 07940

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

The most ominous aspect of the decision to dissolve the Arts Council's Literature Department is that it was taken without being formally discussed either by the Literature Advisory Panel, or by the members of the Arts Council itself. By the time this column is published we shall know whether or not the issue was raised at last Wednesday's council meeting. The Chairman of the Literature Panel, Dr Robert Woof, who seems to have been taken by surprise by events, told me that he was confident that the issue would be raised. But at the time of going to press, the matter was not on the council's agenda.

The decision to wind up the Literature Department is being treated entirely as a "management" matter. Following the run-down of state subsidy for literature in March last year, heralded by the Arts Council policy document *The Glory of the Garden* and the internal review of management procedures now under way, it has been concluded that there is only enough work for the Department to justify the part-time employment of one officer and one secretary. Cynics have long held that the productivity of the Literature Department suggested that staffing was already at that level, but until April 1 at least, the department will continue to employ a Director, Charles Osborne, a Deputy-Director, one officer and two secretaries. Reports of their redundancy have been much exaggerated, for there is an elaborate procedure to be gone through first, but it is unlikely that other work will be found for them. Charles Osborne, who left for a month's holiday as the news broke, has been with the Council since 1966, and would qualify for the maximum redundancy payment of some £30,000.

The immediate response, both of the staff union at 105 Piccadilly and of the Society of Authors and the Writers' Guild, has been to try to get the decision debated by the Council. (My impression is that Mr Osborne, who is not a member of the staff branch of the Association

of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff, would not be particularly grateful for their efforts on his behalf.) The staff fear that further redundancies are threatened, now that the management has announced that it will hold its costs to last year's levels. The writers' organizations fear that the council is being called upon to rubber-stamp the actions of an increasingly autocratic Chairman, Sir William Rees-Mogg, and his Secretary-General, Luke Rittner.

The official line is that the dissolution of the Literature Department is merely the consequence of *The Glory of the Garden*, which the council agreed. Though the closure has been long forecast in these columns, nowhere is such drastic action outlined in that increasingly discredited document. *The Glory of the Garden* proposed that the bias of arts funding towards London should be corrected in favour of the regions, but the government has failed to provide enough money to do this. The Council is having to distort its finances in order to appear to be carrying out the policy, but the effect on the regions is small, and rate capping and the dissolution of the Metropolitan Counties has thrown the "partnership", upon which the Council was relying into confusion. A major proposal in the document, the export of a London orchestra to Nottingham, has been abandoned, and the Arts Council's future management of the South Bank is being adroitly sabotaged by the Greater London Council.

The question remains, what is to happen to state subsidy for literature? With the Council's budget for literature from April reduced to £518,000 the answer is that there will be very little support available. Although the Council is still committed to sustaining poetry, subventions to Secker and Warburg and Faber for poetry publishing are being stopped. The money for bursaries has been cut to £15,000, *Encounter* loses its grant, the publisher John Calder's grant is cut from £35,000 to £10,000, and the magazine *Ambit* celebrates its 100th issue with the news that its grant is reduced

from £8,000 to £2,000.

One of the objects of *The Glory of the Garden* was to make money available for developments in the regions, and it would be reasonable to expect the twelve Regional Arts Associations to benefit from these savings at the centre. So far, this has not been the case. Literature Department schemes for Writers' Fellowships and aid to bookshops were specifically excluded from devolution, a fund for "regional initiatives" in literature is coming to an end, and it is unlikely that such new money as the Council has found for the regions will filter down to literature. After all, with the Arts Council setting its face against support for literature, the RAAs, who get 75 per cent of their funds from this source, would be foolish to make strong bids on literature's behalf.

On March 11 Sir William Rees-Mogg will deliver an Arts Council lecture on "The Political Economy of the Arts". We will have to see if he lays his emphasis on the political, or on the economical, but clearly these are the most important priorities at 105 Piccadilly.

* * *

While an exhibition of Modern Artists' Illustrated Books in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum will open next month, the library itself remains closed. Would-be users of the National Art Library have had a frustrating year, ever since it was first closed last February at the start of a major programme of rewiring, redecoration and repairs. It has been open for brief periods, but when I last visited it in January, readers were enduring conditions evocative of the public libraries in Leningrad in 1941.

Like the rest of the V & A, the library has been in need of repair for some time: the work is expected to cost some £300,000, and the aim is to restore the original colour scheme of 1884, when the rooms first opened. As from March 4 it will be possible to telephone for an appointment to consult the holdings, and it is hoped it will be fully open by the end of May.

The V & A's Director, Sir Roy Strong, has

decided on important changes to the organization of the library, as well as to its appearance. For the first time in its history it is being put in the charge of a qualified librarian.

* * *

An intense programme of fund-raising has managed to secure the future of the University of Toronto's computer-based *Dictionary of Old English*. The project was conceived when a Canadian Rhodes scholar, Angus Cameron, was preparing a BLitt at Oxford under the supervision of Christopher Ball, now Warden of Keble. On his return to Canada, Cameron persuaded the University of Toronto in 1970 to take on a scheme which involved placing the entire corpus of Old English, three million words, on computer, using not only manuscripts and early printed books, but also sources such as coins, jewellery and sculpture. A computer concordance is now being used by scholars.

Originally Cameron and Ball were joint editors of the *Dictionary*, but most of the work was being done in Canada, and Ball withdrew. He remarked to me somewhat ruefully that the centre of Anglo-Saxon studies seemed to have shifted to Toronto. Sadly, Cameron died of cancer in 1983, and financial pressure meant that the University of Toronto were unable to fill his vacant post. The result, Cameron's successor on the project, Professor Ashly Crandall Amos told me, is that there have been three people writing entries part-time, when there has been work for eight or nine, and publication faced long delays.

Now an appeal has raised a million Canadian dollars for the Angus Cameron Memorial Fund, and two people are to be engaged to work full-time. It is hoped that the first fascicle of the *Dictionary*, for the letter D, will be published at the end of this year. Although publication of the dictionary has been secured, there is still a certain academic vagueness about the timetable. The University of Toronto's President George Connell has said "we can look forward to seeing this dictionary published on schedule in the next ten or so years".

national is doing the telling off. And, after all, Graff's and Newman's jeremiads can be placed as part of a continuing tradition of prophetic self-laceration. But George Steiner's memorable attack in the fifteenth anniversary issue, Fall/Winter 1980/81, on the moral hollowiness of the American intellectual chaos - a situation, in his view, too cheery, too accepting, too wedded to popular standards, and, above all, tricked out entirely in second-hand European clothes - was something else. Old *Salmagundi*-hand Henry Pachter thought Steiner's piece elitist and racist and a version of *Mein Kampf*. But the nerves Steiner touched were raw because they're at the central ganglion of *Salmagundi*'s own definitions of the American mind.

In its pages we have indeed got used to a consistent effort to popularize and colonize European thinkers and thinking, to stiffen the liberal American mush with borrowed European certitudes, Marxist, Barthelmean, Derridean, accompanied by a continually strong dislike of Englishness, fearfulness of Marxism, worries over the readability of the likes of Derrida; and even banal confusion in issue after issue as to how the acquired tags of European language should be handled (*voulué, apogée, Die Apologie du Avantgarde* are all too normal).

There was no immediate reply to Steiner's crushing statement that Susan Sontag proved his case, she being a typical American intellectual diligently self-modelled on European lines. No doubt, though, since *Salmagundi* is by far the liveliest of all American journals exercised by the present crises of American mind amid the welter of available potentialities, there soon will be.

The National Film Theatre's season of films and videos on Wales and the Welsh people, *Views of the Valleys: Images of Welsh culture and history*, begins on March 1 (St David's Day) and runs until March 29. Among the films to be shown are *How Green is My Valley* and *Under Milkwood*. David Ponting will perform his *Dylan Thomas: The Man and the Myth* on Saturday, March 23 at 8.30pm. Further information is available from the NPT Press Office, tel: 01-928 4114.

Letters

The Eisenhower Presidency

Sir, - In his otherwise incisive and eloquent review of Stephen Ambrose's two-volume biography of Dwight Eisenhower (February 8), Michael Howard goes astray when he asserts that, until now, the prevalent image of Eisenhower had been one of "a rather naive, kind-hearted man of abundant goodwill and limited capabilities". . . . There were few people in the 1960s and 1970s who looked back on the Eisenhower era as America's finest hour.

It is true that during the later stages of his presidency and especially in the four to five years immediately afterwards, Eisenhower was regarded by most historians and journalists as not having been a particularly competent leader or policy-maker. As Professor Howard points out, vigorous attacks were launched on the domestic and foreign policies of the Eisenhower administration, and Eisenhower himself was depicted as having been bumbling and inarticulate.

But by the mid-1960s, as American involvement in Vietnam deepened and domestic opposition grew, attitudes towards Eisenhower began to shift. In 1967, Murray Kempton, a prominent liberal journalist, wrote an article in *Esquire* magazine that lavished praise upon Eisenhower. Kempton wrote with special admiration about Eisenhower's ability to avoid embroiling US troops in unwinnable conflicts abroad. Similarly glowing accounts of Eisenhower's political shrewdness and foreign policy management soon came from such politically diverse commentators as Garry Wills, Richard Rhodes, L. F. Stone, Walter Cronkite, William O'Neill and Barton Bernstein. Several of these commentators suggested that Eisenhower had been a "brilliant man" and a "political genius".

The tendency to find previously unknown virtues in Eisenhower became so widespread by the late 1960s that the distinguished columnist Richard Rovere was moved to write an article in early 1971 challenging the new interpretations. Even Rovere, however, offered considerable praise for the former president. As more documents were declassified in the 1970s, other scholars and historians discovered further grounds for praising Eisenhower. Fred Greenstein, a noted political scientist, offered a laudatory assessment of Eisenhower's presidential style in his book *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*.

In short, from the mid-1960s and all through the 1970s, long before Stephen Ambrose's biography of Eisenhower appeared, the general academic view of the Eisenhower presidency was distinctly favourable (indeed, at times excessively so). What is especially valuable about Ambrose's two volumes is not, as Michael Howard would suggest, that they rescue Eisenhower from undeserved obloquy. Eisenhower's reputation had long been secure. Rather, the chief virtue of Ambrose's books is that the author manages to avoid either exaggerating Eisenhower's capabilities or attacking Eisenhower unjustifiably. Ambrose has provided a meticulous and balanced, and therefore admirable, account.

Britain does less for its literature, here and abroad, than any other country, excepting those of the Third World.

PETER OWEN.
73 Kenway Road, London SW5.

'Der junge Mann'

Sir, - Ray Ockenden's review of *Der junge Mann* by Botho Strauss (February 22) picks up Strauss's pointers concerning time, utopianism, romanticism and the fairy-tale fantastic, and correctly identifies elements of the late Goethe, of Hesse, Mann and Lewis Carroll in the work. I feel uneasy, however, to see that in his diligent assessment Ockenden fails to perceive the central drive of *Der junge Mann*. The novel (to call it that for convenience) scrutinizes the nature and myth of Germany itself, and phases of the work can be seen as corresponding to *Gründerzeit* empire-building or latter-day *Wirtschaftswunder* expansionism, while many other details - like the *Nur-Schädel-Monstrum*, the characterization of Ossia, the crocheted toilet-roll cover on the back ledge of a family saloon-car ("O Deutschland!") - make sense only as part of a fabric of analysis of the work's hero, Germany. In fact it seems indeed possible (as the blurb Ockenden dismisses claims) to read *Der junge Mann* as a *Bildungsroman* with Germany as the embled protagonist. I confess I find *Der junge Mann* less successful than other prose works by Botho Strauss, and share the reservations of the German critics Ockenden disagrees with; but at all events it seems to me that Botho Strauss must be paid the compliment of a careful reading.

MICHAEL HULSE.
61 Lansdale Road, Oxford.

Subsidizing Literature

Sir, - In his letter (February 22) Peter Grose of Secker and Warburg quotes Charles Osborne's statement that Arts Council grants will be confined to "those of our long standing clients whose work is still relevant to our reduced remit" and his reference to "literary magazines and small presses . . . who would certainly go out of existence without our help".

In view of what Osborne writes I would like to make known the treatment the Enitharmon Press has received from the Literature Department of the Arts Council. I am a small one-man press; since 1969 I have published about 100 titles, about three-quarters of which have been contemporary poetry. From 1972 I have received from the Arts Council a modest subsidy, either as a direct grant or as a guarantee against loss; without this it would have been impossible to continue.

In a letter to me dated February 5 Charles Osborne writes that the Council will not be making any subsidy to the Enitharmon Press in

1985-6; but he hopes that the Press will be able to continue its "valuable work". No advance intimation of this withdrawal of support was given to me.

It is most regrettable that Secker and Warburg are being forced to reduce their commitment to the publication of poetry because of the Council's failure of support. The situation for small presses is however much more serious as Peter Grose implies and as Charles Osborne explicitly states.

Unless I can find money elsewhere the Council's action is likely to force me to abandon plans to publish seven titles in 1985-6 and to tell the authors that I cannot publish their books because of lack of funds; and to announce the closure of the Enitharmon Press.

I can claim to be one of the long-standing clients referred to by Charles Osborne in his letter to Secker and Warburg; on his own admission my work is valuable. If I have to bring the Enitharmon Press to an end the responsibility for its demise must be placed firmly where it belongs - at the door of the Literature Department of the Arts Council.

ALAN CLODD.
Enitharmon Press, 22 Huntingdon Road, London N2.

Sir, - I endorse Peter Grose's letter (February 22), which states that poetry and literature, where unknown authors or "difficult" books are concerned, require State support.

Scandinavian countries, and most others, assist their literature with grants to authors and publishers, and/or minimum guaranteed literary sales.

Under present conditions (library cuts, rising prices, reduced sales in general) it is almost impossible to publish new quality fiction, poetry and certain categories of non-fiction. This must result in eventual cultural stagnation.

The Arts Council attitude towards books has been somewhat odd in recent years, with blanket grants made to some commercial publishers and little or nothing for others. The phasing out of the Literature Department is ill-timed, as there is no practical alternative source of patronage.

Britain does less for its literature, here and abroad, than any other country, excepting those of the Third World.

PETER OWEN.
73 Kenway Road, London SW5.

'Der junge Mann'

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MICHAEL HULSE.
61 Lansdale Road, Oxford.

Sunwise

Sir, - The funniest joke in Eric Korn's "Reminders" (January 25) is surely his observation that "jokes travel more slowly from East to West than sunrise, following a little-known physical law".

THOMAS A. SEBEOK.
Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Jane Austen and Mme Cottin

Sir, - May I share with your readers what I regard as an important literary discovery?

A distinctive feature of *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen's longest (and oddest) novel, is the author's involvement of her characters in amateur theatricals: namely, an abortive production of *Lovers' Vows*, Mrs Inchbald's adaptation of Kotzebue's sentimental melodrama, *Das Kind der Liebe*. The *ingenue* of that play, in its English dress, is Amelia Wildenhaim, a role taken in the novel by the witty, charming and seductive Mary Crawford. In a sense, then, there is a prominent "Amelia" at "Mansfield". No one, I believe, has so far noticed that in the first decade of the nineteenth century - the years immediately preceding *Mansfield Park* - there were at least three London editions of an epistolary novel called *Amelia Mansfield*.

This was an English version of *Amélie Mansfield*, by the popular French novelist Mme "Sophie" Cottin (née Mari Ristau). Mme Cottin, though artistically inferior to her English contemporary, was in several respects her Gallic counterpart. Each woman was born in the 1770s; each turned out only a half-dozen novels, at or soon after the turn of the century; and each died a relatively early death, which cut short a brilliant literary career. (For comparison, Mme Cottin's dates are 1770-1807 and Jane Austen's 1775-1817.)

Amélie Mansfield, Mme Cottin's third novel, was published in 1802 and quickly turned into English, two versions appearing in 1803 and a third in 1809. (Each was issued by a different publisher, but all bore the same title: *Amelia Mansfield*.) *Mansfield Park* was begun in 1811, finished in 1813 and published in 1814. If Jane Austen's title is considered merely coincidental, one must suppose that she was completely ignorant of both French and English versions of *Amélie/Amelia Mansfield*, something hard to believe of so assiduous a novel-reader. But if, on the other hand, one assumes that the English author was aware of the French novel, her own title has the appearance (or so it seems to me) of a deliberate reply.

Thanks to a plot summary and detailed analysis in L. C. Sykes's admirable (French-language) critical biography, *Madame Cottin* (Oxford, 1949), I can venture a few tentative observations.

At first glance, *Amélie Mansfield* seems the kind of fiction Jane Austen would have shunned as repugnant to her moral code. The widowed heroine, mother of a small child, becomes the mistress of a man whose real name she does not even know, becomes pregnant by him, and dies of exhaustion before she can marry him. But there are striking similarities to the plot of *Mansfield Park*. Mme Cottin's *Amélie*, like Jane Austen's Fanny Price, goes to live with a rich uncle, though reluctantly, because it means separation from a beloved brother who figures prominently in the plot. Like Fanny Price, at her uncle's mansion *Amélie* meets and falls in love with a cousin. (She does not recognize him after a separation of fifteen years, and he seduces her under an assumed name.) Like Fanny Price, *Amélie* has a malevolent aunt who persecutes her.

There are also, unlikely as it may seem, similarities of character between the two heroines. According to Mme Cottin herself, *Amélie* is a blend of "pudeur souffrante" and "voluptueuse langueur". Now Fanny Price, though somewhat languorous, is far from voluptuous! But the first phrase exactly describes her modest (if not prudish) and long-suffering nature. (If there is in fact literary indebtedness, I suggest that Jane Austen drew on Mme Cottin's *Amélie* for Mary Crawford as well as Fanny Price.) Perhaps the most important resemblance is that, despite her irregular life, Mme Cottin's paradoxical heroine can be described (by Professor Sykes) as "la pure, la scrupuleuse, la vertueuse *Amélie*". The invariable, almost insufferable rightness of Fanny Price has caused many admirers of Jane Austen to value *Mansfield Park* rather than other works in the Austen canon.

For a variety of reasons it seems most unlikely (I would even say impossible) that Jane Austen had no knowledge of Mme Cottin's work. For one thing, Jane's cousin, the charming, sophisticated woman generally known as Eliza de Feuillide, was married to a French count who went to the guillotine; she later married Jane's brother Henry and played hostess to Jane in London. Also, we know that in 1810 Jane read, in French, one of the novels of Mme Cottin's rival, Madame de Genlis. And Mme Cottin's last work, called in English *Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, was so popular that the English composer and dramatist Frederick Reynolds adapted its plot for an operetta, *The Exiles*, performed at Covent Garden in 1808. (The novel itself remained in print to the end of the century.)

One final point. Jane Austen is known to have been a devotee of Samuel Richardson, and especially of his *Sir Charles Grandison*. It has recently been discovered that Richardson's novel mentions a Mansfield Park, presided over by a Sir Thomas. (Jane Austen's Mansfield is the seat of Sir Thomas Bertram, Bart.) I suggest a three-way connection of some sort, involving Richardson's novel, Jane Austen's novel and Mme Cottin's *Amélie Mansfield*, where (in the French, at least) the heroine's wealthy uncle is named "Grandson" (*sic*).

Perhaps someone who has access (as I have not) to an English-language text of *Amélie Mansfield* will pursue this matter further. There must be many persons besides myself who are curious as to the literary genetics of Jane Austen's most controversial novel.

R. D. PEPPER.
PO Box 1068, Palo Alto, California 94302.

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'Sans Famille'

Sir, - Reviewing *The Foundling*, Douglas Munro's new translation of Hector Malot's *Sans Famille* (February 1), Anne Duchêne says the passage where Rémi meets Garofoli was "mercifully" shortened. Not having noticed any particular length in the original, I re-read it. In my opinion, it was brief anyway; and I could see no reason to abridge it.

I read it in French about a year ago, when I was twelve. I finished both volumes in one afternoon and thought it a marvellous book. The style is lovely (style is not translatable, however talented the translator may be), and I think that cutting anything out would greatly lessen the interest of the book.

Why "render it down" anyway? Is it too long for the *jeunesse* of today? Or can't they read something that makes them cry? If, for the sake of "juvenile stomachs", all the interesting bits have been deleted, the negative result of Anne Duchêne's "poli" does not surprise me. Or are adult stomachs the problem?

RUTH M. MACINERNEY.
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The 'Starnberg Quartet'

Sir, - John Deathridge is banging on an open door. When in 1946 I published a hypothetical reconstruction of Wagner's quartet movement (from *Stiegfried* and the *Myth*) I began by saying that "in 1864 Wagner wrote or sketched a string quartet in one movement; it was never performed and has completely disappeared". In my review of the *New Grove Wagner* I did not claim that the "Starnberg Quartet" existed but I pointed out that a fragment of it does in *Stiegfried*, a fragment which Cosima recognized as "her" theme which had "come to him in Starnberg . . . and which he had promised to me as a quartet". I cited two other diary entries to the same effect. And Curt von Westernhagen quotes in *Die Entstehung des "Ring"* (Zürich, 1973) a sketch dated "14 Nov. 64" which he says was intended for a quartet to be dedicated to Cosima; it is practically identical with the B major passage introducing "Ewig war ich" in *Stiegfried* but with alternative notes in the part-writing.

GERALD ABRAHAM.
Old School House, Ebernoe, Petworth, Sussex.

An annual prize of £1,000, to be known as the Runciman Award, in recognition of Sir Steven Runciman's distinguished contribution to Anglo-Greek understanding, has been instituted by the Anglo-Hellenic League for a literary work, wholly or mainly about Greece, past or present. Further details may be obtained from Sue Bennett at the National Book League, Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ, which will administer the award.

COMMENTARY

A language for landscape

Frances Spalding

St Ives 1939-64
Tate Gallery until April 14
TOMCROSS
Painting the Warmth of the Sun: St Ives artists 1939-75
208pp. Guildford: Lutterworth Press. £16.95.
07188 26140
PETER DAVIES
The St Ives Years: Essays on the growth of an artistic phenomenon
48pp. Wimborne. Dorset: The Wimborne Bookshop. £4.95.
0950784435

At the Tate a large, prestigious exhibition charts the shifting relationship between nature and art that made a small town on the coast of Cornwall internationally renowned during the period 1939-64. Like the town, in and out of season, the exhibition fluctuates. It marshals a large number of Barbara Hepworth's finest carvings and then shuffles in a token sample of work by her assistants. Elsewhere, you have to be seized by the same curiosity as the exhibition organizer, David Brown, to embrace all the lesser-known names, some not sufficiently represented for their contribution to be fairly assessed. At times St Ives and its surrounding landscape dwindle to an excuse: some of these artists were merely occasional summer visitors, few investing their lives in the area as did Hepworth and the potter Bernard Leach. But even when this exhibition is at its most peripheral, it reveals unexpected connections, a surprisingly far-reaching network of contacts and influences. Geographically remote, St Ives has its place on the map of twentieth-century British art, for it was here that modernist and native traditions merged, abstraction combining with a sense of place.

This development was fostered by circumstance and chance. Ben Nicholson had visited St Ives in 1928 and, with Christopher Wood, happened upon Alfred Wallis, the elderly naive artist who painted from memory on scraps of card. These small works fill an entire wall in the Tate's introductory section. With an intuitive rightness, Wallis brings an unforced poetry to the rhythmic jiggling of boats beneath Saltash Bridge or to the shape of their sails as they hold the wind. Nicholson, in his "Porthmeor, Window looking out to Sea" also aims at an intimate correspondence between content and means: the image, alternately transparent and opaque, shifts in and out of the pictorial space like the breeze through the open window. By 1939, however, Wallis's example had long been assimilated and it was expediency that led Nicholson and his second wife Barbara Hepworth to accept, a week before before war broke out, refuge in Cornwall at the invitation of Adrian Stokes. Naum Gabo arrived soon afterwards. His presence, together with that of Nicholson and Hepworth, transformed St Ives into a vital centre of modern art and set a standard of professionalism that a younger generation was to emulate.

The artists who migrated to St Ives in the 1950s and 60s benefited from well-established working conditions. St Ives, with the nearby Newlyn, had been an artists' haunt since the 1880s. One of the attractions was a light which, reflected off the sea on three sides of the St Ives peninsula, gives to the town an unusual clarity. In addition, the sail-lofts, left empty by the declining fishing industry, made excellent studios, and this encouraged artists to congregate in the old narrow streets in the Downalong area. By the 1920s enough paintings were being sent from St Ives to the Royal Academy each year to fill an entire railway carriage. Much of this painting was a purely visual response to the immediate environment. As a reminder of this, the Tate exhibits breakers on rocks by Boris de Smedt and the laboured impressionism of John Piper. After 1939 observation gave way to a more dynamic approach; a concern with surface was replaced with a desire to recreate sensations experienced while observing, sliding or moving through landscapes. The artist no longer stood outside nature but strove to become one with it.

This fusion of subject and object was begun by Naum Gabo, ironically the artist outwardly least affected by the Cornish landscape. At the Tate, his ideas recur in the work of John Wells, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham and Peter Lanyon, all artists associated with St Ives before 1946, the year that Gabo left for America. Using clear perspex and transparent thread, Gabo made visible the intersection of two planes. Movement could now be studied from within. Aware of this breakthrough, Barns-Graham, in a series of paintings based on glaciers, aimed at bringing "all angles at once, through, and all round, as a bird flies, a total experience". A similar motivation lies behind those carvings where Hepworth tunnels into form, opening out a dialogue between interior and exterior. Lanyon, in his painting "The Yellow Runner" opens up the hillside to reveal a womb-like hollow. It is closely related to the overlapping transparent planes in Gabo's war-time oils, painted in Lanyon's studio while the latter served in the Royal Air Force.

These correspondences are ignored by the hanging, which follows a chronological route. As the show progresses, the search for an abstract language is continually redefined as the response to the landscape alters its focus. The starting point for Terry Frost was a walk along the quay or the rocking of boats in harbour; for Lanyon an aerial view, cloud formations or an awareness of the scars left by mine-shafts. Bryan Wynter's veils of paint combine an allusion to the movement of water with the colours and textures of nature seen close up. And Roger Hilton, alternating between a zestful enjoyment of female sexuality and more oblique allusions to landscape, charges his canvases with astringent abstraction and a sense of risk.

It was this generation of artists that gave rise to talk of a "St Ives School". Tom Cross's book is the first to deal at length with the phenomenon. Its title, like that of its predecessor, Denys Val Baker's *Britain's Art Colony by the Sea*, suggests a sunniness that both the art and social context lacked. Most of these artists spurned impressionist subjects, working not outdoors but in their studios. The St Ives residents viewed them with characteristic caution and neighbourly distrust, while the artists themselves seemed to flourish on enmities and disputes. Sven Berlin, the sculptor, had recalled: "everybody knew everybody; no one could live in the town for more than a week without being gutted like a herring and spread out in the sun to dry and for all to see". Even

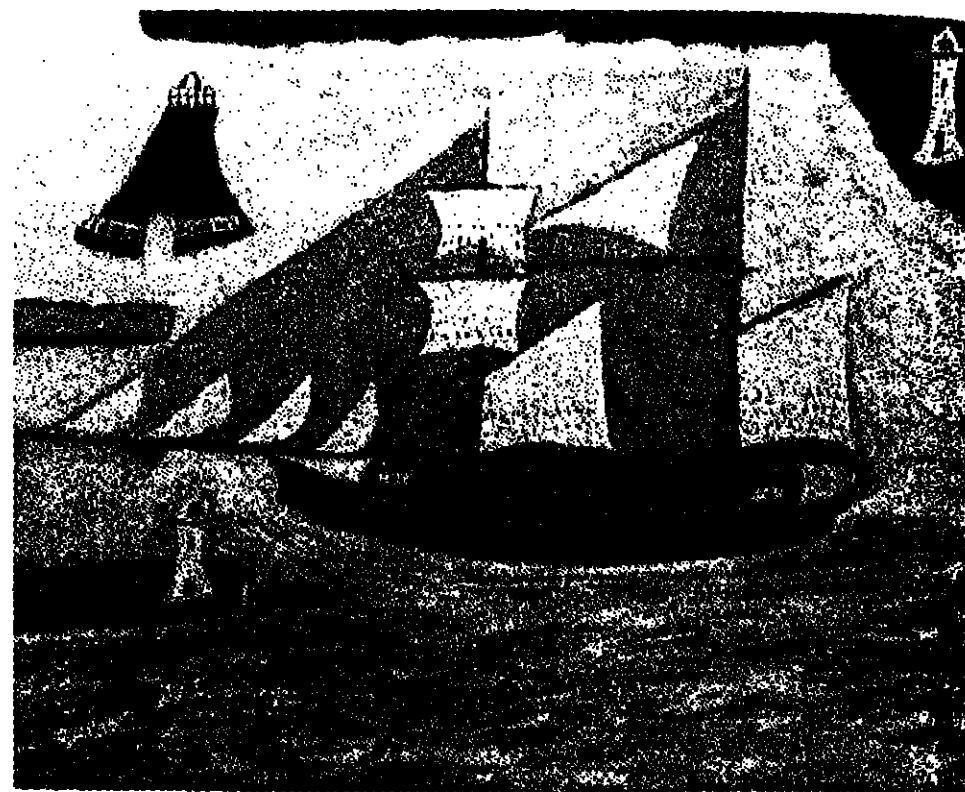
Patrolling the periphery

Peter Kemp

Arena: My Son the Novelist
BBC2

"His was a difficult birth. He was a forceps delivery, and still has the scars behind his ears. He weighed 10½lb and was a lovely peach colour", reveals Howard Jacobson's mother in a *Radio Times* article linked to *Arena*'s programme, *My Son the Novelist*. *Arena* itself opened with a similar obstetric thrust - "Howard Jacobson was a big baby but he was a late developer in the world of fiction" - then went on to look at the genesis of his novels in the light of heredity and environment.

His evolution into a novelist - someone simultaneously committed to privacy and publicity or, at any rate, publishing - might, Jacobson suggested, stem from a mixed pedigree. One side of the family (that of his mother, who shunned *Arena*'s cameras) is reserved, while the other is extrovert. Documenting the latter at unexpected length, *Arena* devoted chunks of its programme to goggling at interminable reels of out of coloured handkerchiefs from surprising places by Jacobson's amateur conjurer father. While it was interesting to see the original of the character who in *Coming From Behind* promotorily produces a new-laid egg from F.R. Leavis's ear, under prolonged attention, his magical paraphernalia fairly rapidly lost its charm. It was hard, too, not to feel that the time given over to this predestinating parent



"The Blue Ship" (Mount's Bay), c. 1934, by Alfred Wallis, showing the Mount's Bay lighthouses, oil on cardboard; one of Wallis's seascapes on irregular scraps of paper and card, which use patches of unpainted background. Wallis wrote to H.S. Ede, who purchased work from him: "I thought it not necessary to paint all round so I never Don't it." From the exhibition catalogue, St Ives 1939-64, edited by David Brown (248pp, Tate Gallery, Paperback, £11.95, 0 946590 20 6). The catalogue contains an extended account of life in the artists' colony, "St Ives: a personal memoir, 1947-55", by David Lewis.

the surrounding landscape, with its disused mines, naked granite and wind-blasted trees, can seem rebarbative. John Heath-Stubbs found it "fanatic with sorrow", all in all "a hideous and wicked country/Sloping to hateful sunsets and the end of time".

Partisan feelings still linger on. Peter Davies's essays are noticeably sympathetic to Sven Berlin, whose book on Wallis enraged Nicholson. Davies provides a useful summary, and though his text is patchy on the 1950s, it contains sufficient detail, drawn from unpublished sources and personal interviews, to make this a necessary addition to Tom Cross's more substantial account. Cross has a solid knowledge of twentieth-century British art and often wanders away from St Ives in order to display it. It is a pity that he follows Denys Val Baker in calling Sir Leslie Stephen a poet, and a number of subsidiary names are misspelt. But his appreciation of art is perceptive and just. He can recreate in prose the abrasive energy

might more usefully have been spent looking at another kind of ancestry that helped generate Jacobson's work: the literary. *Coming From Behind*, for instance, doesn't only represent one of the latest offshoots from the ever-spreading family-tree of Campus Fiction: the Polytechnic Novel; it also shares marked features with some of its fictional forebears: *Lucky Jim*, *Porterhouse Blue*, *Stepping Westward* and *Changing Places*.

Where the programme was both entertaining and enlightening was in its genial tour, peppered with pungent witticisms from Jacobson, of locales he had lived in, then retrospectively doused with withering farce. The theme of the Jewish outsider is a central fixture - almost a fixation - in his novels. So it was illuminating to learn, as the film travelled round what's left of the Salford Jewish neighbourhood of his early years, that Jacobson and his parents were never part of the Orthodox community but hovered on its fringes.

The periphery is a zone that Jacobson has patrolled with satiric profit ever since. As an undergraduate at Cambridge, he recalled, he had a crippling sense of not belonging. Nor could he be said to have integrated into the next English academic establishment he joined: Wolverhampton Polytechnic, which, as Wrotesley Polytechnic, looms so large and ludicrous in his first book, *Coming From Behind*; *Arena* supplied shots of this place and its puerile to back up the authenticity of Jacobson's picture. Obligingly, too, a sample of staff put in an appearance seemingly designed to

assure you that the book's most outlandish satiric moments are all but documentary. Bizarrely verbalizing denizens of that technopedagogic world - of "modules", "ancillary back-up units", "disciplines" . . . so multi- and inter- as to require a full-time navigational expert to explain . . . the complex system of inputs and through-routes" - into which Jacobson pitches his well-aimed satiric spanners, they mechanically attempted to shred the novel. Though one of them did admit some approval of what he called "the lacunas of reality in the text", his female colleague found the book's "project" ("reactionary", "irrelevant", "elitist", etc) one that "activated all these stereotypes that are ultimately damaging to the educational project".

From the academic erosions of Wrotesley (the film moved on to the beautifully ravaged Cornish coast where, at Boscastle, Jacobson has recently been living. Even in this picturesque spot, extracts from his latest novel stressed, he has managed to feel at variance. Standing at his customary, contrary angle to things, this time, a region, its mystique and local literary hero - he has produced a second novel of mocking disengagement: *Peeping Tom*, with its glamour-stripping stare at Hardy and the romantic cult of the countryside. "Irony and nature are at odds; they're warring gods", Jacobson claimed as he sauntered through the handsome landscape. On the evidence of his sardonic contributions to this enjoyable programme, though, even Cornwall's lush green dear hasn't muffled his sharp wit.

A sense of responsibility

David Sexton

HENRIK IBSEN
Little Eyolf
Lyric, Hammersmith

"It's a masterpiece and a marvel; and it must leap upon the stage", enthused Henry James on reading the first two acts of *Little Eyolf* in 1894. However, when he got to the third he found it "a singular and almost inexplicable drop"; and the play has conspicuously not leapt upon the stage since then. There have been only four productions in London since the first; the most recent was also at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in 1958. Michael Meyer, the translator then and now, admits that it has not been "adequately produced anywhere outside Scandinavia, if indeed it has ever been adequately produced there". There was however a fine television version in 1982, which confirmed Ibsen's particular aptness for the small screen.

Alfred Allmers returns from a trip to the mountains to his thwarted, rapacious wife Rita, and his supposed half-sister, the equally blocked Asta. Far from finishing his book on *The Responsibility of Man* he has abandoned it and decided instead to take on the responsibility of his crippled son, Little Eyolf. Rita is jealously disgusted by this failure to surrender himself entirely to her - jealous both of Asta and of her own child.

The first act ends with the accidental drowning of Little Eyolf, and the second contains Asta's revelation that she is not even half-sister to Alfred. These are the two outward events of the play; its true action is the revelation of the inwardness of the individual in the critical moment. In the shifting of relationships under the contesting pressures of sex and kinship, movement in one area creates alteration in every other. This profound imagination of the interdependency of all the participants makes it a demanding play to stage (and to watch), since so much is to be conveyed by nuance and indirection.

The great strength of this production lies in its cast. Diana Rigg is excellent as Rita. Her imposing appearance, with its flashes of horrifying possessiveness, is soon stripped away, leaving an enduring core of desolate remorse. Ronald Pickup as her husband does not have as

strong a presence as Anthony Hopkins had in the television production, but, despite a tendency to a rather mannered and jerky delivery, he gives a coherent reading of Alfred's weak character. Cheryl Campbell as Asta opens out in the second act, as she recreates her childhood with him, having been somewhat brittle and withdrawn, nursing her secret, in the first. Paul Moriarty takes the unrewarding part of her suitor, the roadbuilder Borgheim, and contributes valuable ballast to the group - solid, steady, something of a Scandinavian John Browdie.

Clare Davidson's direction of this re-pointed translation is competent rather than inspiring. She has made some clear decisions (such as that Asta does go off happily with Borgheim) which help to articulate the play, if they do cut off some of its suggestiveness. But the sets, designed by Tim Bickerton, are damagingly feeble, not fulfilling Ibsen's instructions and lacking in depth, so that the tendency Joyce observed in these late works, to get out of closed rooms, is denied its significance. *Little Eyolf* exists between the heights and the depths, between the peaks of the mountains and the underflow of the fjord, and this crucial dimension is flattened out. Nor are the lighting and sound much better, and the value of the few important props, such as the water-lilies that "shoot up to the surface from the depths", is thrown away by their shoddiness. Again, the strange messenger of fate, the Rat Wife (Anne Dyson) lacks authority, being represented as a rather literary tramp with an invisible dog.

These faults do not wholly vitiate the play's power to move. The difficult third act, which must avoid being either a banally happy ending or an outright anti-climax, is a definite success. (And this despite the long intervals which needlessly sacrifice some of this short piece's momentum.) In the final act the bitter recriminations modulate into a singularly bleak form of self-knowledge, as Rita and Alfred are left together alone - facing as best they can what remains of their lives, afraid to meet each other's eyes. Even James conceded that "Really uttered, *done*, in the gathered northern twilight, with the flag flown and the lights coming out across the fjord, the scene might have a real solemnity of beauty", and in this production it does.

A matter of revenge

Harold Hobson

GRAHAM SWANNELL
A State of Affairs
Lyric Studio, Hammersmith

Graham Swannell, whose first stage play this is, is a writer who says new things about old subjects, and says them very well: with wit, sensibility, and tenderness, only now and then indulging a taste for farcical exaggeration. Radio drama, in which Swannell has chiefly had experience, and television, too, as well as the contemporary theatre, have a great deal to say about love, and more about sex, but they rarely distinguish between them. This troubles Mr Swannell, for, in the four playlets which make up *A State of Affairs*, he cannot believe that jumping into bed with a lover or a mistress is the same thing as, or even has anything very much to do with, a lifelong affection that may often be boring, but the loss of which brings desolation in its train.

For Swannell the point of difference is this: sex is revengeable, and love is not. In sex the betrayed character can also betray the betrayer, and often be better at the game than the one who started it. But love is quite another matter. For love is vulnerable, and a counter-betrayal is no consolation. In the one case the tables can be turned; in the second they cannot - not, at least, without breaking all the crockery.

The opening piece, "Stuttgart", is somewhat like Jules Renard's "Le Plaisir de rompre", for it is about a man (Gary Bond) who is intending to renounce sex with his partner. The play consists chiefly of the hero's frantic preparation and rehearsal of the speech with which he

will communicate his terrible resolution. His mind is inventive, his fluency overwhelming, his arguments unanswerable, but his nerve is in ruins, and a pair of high-heeled boots by the side of the bed tells the audience that Mr Bond's shaking body, trembling fingers and sad little efforts at reassurance are well justified. When the lady (Amanda Redman) appears a couple of well-judged verbal blows lay him literally on his back. This is the funniest of the four plays, brilliantly acted by Gary Bond in an ecstasy of gentlemanly panic, but it is not the best. Neither is "Consequences", which immediately follows it. Here again sex is what matters, on a lower social scale than "Stuttgart", and the bitter is sharply bitten, though not before he explains to his aggrieved mistress that an affair is not the same as marriage.

After the interval, things change. Swannell's finesse, his ease and felicity of phrase remain as strong as before. But whereas in the first part of the programme one recognizes that here is an author new to the theatre who can make wry jokes about sex, in the second it is, sprung upon us that his principal area of expertise is pain. Beneath the laughter there is sorrow and the jokes can move us deeply. A man sobbing as the lights fade, because his wife has left him; a hand stretched out to comfort him and then withdrawn; a heartbroken whimper, as someone contemplates the ruins of his life: "I like my marriage". The final word in the play is "Why". Why should such things be? Why should grief be unassuageable? But there is no answer. The sensitive production is by Peter James, and there are admirable performances by Julie Legrand, Amanda Redmond, Peter Wright and Terrence Hillier, and above all by Gary Bond.

COMMENTARY

Getting the act together

Blake Morrison

NIGEL WILLIAMS
My Brother's Keeper
Greenwich Theatre

As Nigel Williams has discovered, there is no better way to leave behind your earlier plays than to send them up in your new one. Williams made his reputation in the 1970s as a dramatist with a predilection for working-class characters, demotic speech and socialist causes. In this he resembles the playwright, Tony, in *My Brother's Keeper*, who sports proletarian clothes and "writes plays telling cowed Japanese tourists what's wrong with Britain". Or so says Tony's businessman-brother, Sammy. Tony himself prefers to put it differently: "*The Times Literary Supplement* said I had compassion." Later, though, he too joins in the self-ridicule: "I thought you were supposed to be a Marxist." "I'm a coffee-table Marxist."

Sibling rivalry is the real theme of Williams's play, though its ostensible subject is the death of a father. In an NHS ward, "looking as if he's just had a long sleep in a fridge", an ageing, Lear-like Shakespearean actor lies recovering - or not recovering - from a stroke which has left him paralysed down one side. His wife and two sons gather by his bed, trying to will life in him. But he resists them, refuses to eat and (struggling against nominal aphasia) describes what is happening to him as "the thing that lights do at the end of the show". While he prepares to go gently, his two sons - Tony in particular - rage against the dying of the light.

They also, through the feuding, break out of their old shells; Tony from his rasping cynicism, Sammy from his blustering resentment of

the "arty" world. It is a play in the Chekhovian tradition, about a reunited family who bicker, sulk, reminisce, discover old blood-bonds and learn to express their deepest feelings. For all the clinical authenticity of the set (props and drips courtesy of the local Blackheath hospital), the ward is a home from home, and aside from brief interruptions by a male nurse, they have it to themselves. "We're just an ordinary English family, aren't we, even if we are a bit theatrical?" says one of them. And if that remark is a bit signposted, the writing towards the end increasingly clichéd ("I can't live without you", "A love so strong that it frightened us"), and the reconciliatory ending just too ordinary, this is overall a tough, sharp and often very funny play.

It is the theatricality that makes it so. In the two central performances, Reginald Marsh as the actor-father manages classical gestures and booming rhetoric even though he can speak only out of the corner of his mouth; and John McEnery as the dramatist-son is a streak of jabbering energy. (The other half of the family quartet is overshadowed: Doreen Andrew as the mother is relegated to a minor part; and John Price, as Sammy, never really looks or behaves like someone who has made it big in ball bearings.) Even the central premise of the play - that if the family can only "get its act together" the father will regain the will to live - has its theatrical undertone. Elsewhere, self-conscious metaphors about the hospital as a stage compete with a running gag on the inert state of another patient in the corner. And the play's best jokes are finally theatre jokes, like the son demanding positive discrimination on behalf of actors paralysed down one side, or the father claiming that the one thing that can make him cry on stage is the sight of Milton Shulman in the third row.

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French imperatives

Tony Judt

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0 691 05396 0

Eighteen years ago, in a TLS review of Georges Lefebvre's *Directory and Thermidorians*, Richard Cobb pointed to some of the difficulties inherent in translating the works of leading French historians. He suggested that the really interesting work is overlooked, and publishers take on instead the more accessible works of synthesis which are not always of such enduring value. Since then, the study of foreign languages has declined further, and the desirability of having available in English the products of French historical scholarship has commensurately increased. But the problem to which Cobb alluded remains unresolved.

The nature of the difficulty may be seen in the decision of Cambridge University Press to translate the books in the Nouvelle Histoire de la France Contemporaine, which have been appearing in French since 1972. The original edition consists of a series of small paperback volumes covering traditional periods (1792-94, 1871-98, etc) and in nearly every case written by a single historian (usually an acknowledged authority in the field). Cambridge has organized the material differently, grouping the small texts into larger, hardback books, but beyond this the English versions are faithful to the original. The two latest volumes, covering the years 1815-48 and 1871-1914, illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of this undertaking.

The strengths are self-evident. All four authors are major figures in the French historical profession, but with widely differing interests. André Jardin and André-Jean Tudesq jointly wrote the French version of their work, but there it was divided into two small books, the first covering narrative development, the second dividing the "life of the nation" into nine regional surveys. The tension between the two writers works well—Jardin is the biographer of Tocqueville, and has an appropriate line in ironic commentary, while Tudesq wrote the definitive study of the provincial *notables* of the Orleanist monarchy and brings to his chapters an unrivalled familiarity with the political sociology of the contemporary political élite. Despite being very obviously a work of collaboration, the text is both readable and cohesive, and for certain themes—the long-term consequences of the manner in which the Restoration was implemented, the dissemination of power and authority in early nineteenth-century France—the book is unmatched at its level.

For the first half of the Third Republic, Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rébérioux have been seen together, whereas in the original they had written two distinct, and distinctly different surveys. Rébérioux's is much the more interesting, presenting a thesis about the character of *fin-de-siècle* France which is summarized in the disabused question-mark of the French title of her book. Mayeur, a church historian, confines most of his attention to the mainstream republican politics of the era, announcing at the outset his intention to revert to more traditional historical concerns. Combining the two in one volume thus presents readers with a strange, schizophrenic work, changing not only in focus but also in analytical key as it moves into the Dreyfus Affair and the new century. Mayeur is consistently reliable, if unexciting, but it is Rébérioux, with her quizzical scepticism and her search for insight into the conflicting political and cultural patterns of the world of Poincaré and Proust, who leaves the dominant impression.

Having these books in English is all to the good, but having them in English just as they were is not an unmitigated benefit. It is nine years since Rébérioux appeared in French, eleven years since the publication of the books by Mayeur and Jardin and Tudesq. A lot has happened in French historical writing since then, but none of it is reflected here. Even the bibliographies are outdated. The earlier work has just three items (out of 350) published since 1973, and even a supplementary list notes only a further twelve. The section of the later book due to Mayeur has no book or article listed with a publication date after 1973. Only Rébérioux (or someone on her behalf) has paid attention here, with a respectable number of recent publications included, sixteen of them in English.

Here, then, lies the argument for a different strategy for translation. If one could guarantee to produce an English edition of French textbooks within five years of their original appearance, well and good. But if not, it might be more of a stimulus to translate instead some of the great academic monographs. This need not be the absurd undertaking it might seem to an editor upon first encountering 2,000 pages of annotated analysis of Breton farm prices in the mid-eighteenth century. The distinction between the good and the great is usually well established, and many of the latter have been published in abbreviated form by enterprising mainstream French publishers. Tastes will vary, but few would dispute the benefits that would accrue from an English edition of Adeline Daumard's *La Bourgeoisie Parisienne*, or *Paysans de l'Ouest*, by Paul Bois. Régine Robin's innovative *La Société française en 1789*, or Jean-Jacques Becker's 1914 could both be rendered into manageable English-language editions, and there are many other candidates.

The case for such translation is further strengthened, albeit inadvertently, by Edward Berenson's book on the emergence of the *démocrates-socialistes* in the years of the Second Republic. His theme is the extent to which popular religiosity in rural central and southern France paved the way for the implantation of left-wing ideology, and the book

consists of an argument designed to illustrate just how popular beliefs could be converted into radical politics via the medium of a religiously artisanal moral economy. This is a plausible undertaking, and it is sustained by a close acquaintance with social detail (characteristic of American work on nineteenth-century France), and a clear and aggressively presented argument.

Unfortunately, the argument is perhaps a little too aggressive. The general proposition is weakened by the excessive claims Berenson makes for it. On almost every page our attention is firmly drawn to the religious cast of mind of the small French peasant, to how deeply the artisan and radical mentality depended upon religion and religious imagery, and to how the two had thus so little difficulty in coming together. Everything, from village carnivals to journalistic metaphors, is tipped into the conceptual churn and emerges in a smooth pâté of "popular religion". No other account of radical politicization is seriously considered, and no alternative genealogy of radical political thought countenanced. As a result, one begins with a distinct sympathy for an interesting and neglected line of argument, and emerges with an irritated distaste for the rigidity of the technique.

Although one might take issue with Berenson's categories and definitions (his "artisans", "southerners", "Catholics" and "socialists" are all open to the charge of over-judicious selection), the overriding problem comes from his passages concerning ideology, the chapter on which is the weakest in the book. Ideas, it seems, are "carried or transmitted" along narrow, monolinear tracks, from one era to another and by means of identifiable cultural agents. Way stations are permitted (the "anti-Catholicism" of the 1790s providing a contrast with the philo-Christian sentiments of the 48ers), but sidings and branch-lines are out. The TGV of French popular culture advances with due speed from "Lockean" theories of property to Jean Jaurès and his generically "French" democratic socialism. There is just enough truth in this to make it arguable, but not sufficient to render it credible. The men of the 1790s may have been anti-Catholic, but

they were as interested in popular religious sentiment (and for some of the same reasons) as their successors. The *dém-socs* moral argument against exploitation may have been compatible with a popular Christian ethic, but its origins transcend the coincidence. There were artisans who argued for the generalization of property in the 1840s (and whose views were thus attractive to indebted peasants), but there were also those who argued for its abolition. To magnify the first and ignore the second may serve to explain peasant support in 1849 and 1851, but it hardly provides the foundations for a history of popular radical thought in France. And so on.

Berenson's difficulty, in short, is that he has taken an interesting insight into the politicization of these years—the linguistic consensus which enabled radical political argument to ground itself in popular imagery, some of it religious in origin—and made of it a historical argument that conspicuously lacks intellectual and chronological range. This is a common failing in foreign writing about France, especially in the United States, where institutional pressures to produce an ambitious work conflict with logistic and cultural limitations. The unanticipated result, especially in socio-cultural history, is often a far-reaching set of conclusions resting on a technical apparatus concealing, in its turn, a barely adequate grasp of the wider issues (in this case in the history of ideas). The leading French monographs, by contrast, illustrate the opposite tendency. Here the institutional imperative is to "cover the ground" in every way, while the cultural preference is for intellectual exploration. The result is nearly always more interesting—as Berenson himself acknowledges, in his frequent use of the work of Gérard Cholvy on religion or Philippe Vigier on the experience of the Second Republic in the Alpine departments. If their work, and that of Yves Lequin and Alain Corbin, to whom Berenson pays proper homage, were available in English, the study of French history here would be enormously enriched, and the work of Berenson and others could be understood and appreciated in its proper context.

elucidate the late 1880s in the countryside. Far more than most historians, he has a grasp on Boulangerism's unruliness and intensity. Not since Patrick Hutton has a scholar so painstakingly and elegantly ferreted out the "enclaves of support" that the General's Paris-based front enjoyed in various parts of the French hinterland. Though its strength varied from place to place, it had an impact throughout France in the way it offered a new "national" alternative to traditional political alignments, and in the way it revolutionized electioneering.

Several of the regions under consideration (notably in Isère and the Orne) were inundated by propaganda—millions of posters, portraits, song-sheets, idealized biographies, newspapers and *images d'Épinal*, disseminated by hundreds of hawkers and agents. Some of it was reminiscent of Louis-Napoléon's campaign forty years before, but, as Burns shows, "propaganda, lithography, chromolithography, photography, the postal system, political agents and the roads and railroads they traveled, had all improved in the interim".

While it is true that Boulangerism made an impressive effort to probe the desires of the locals and learn their "language", Burns perhaps overstates what he sees as a sharp difference between the propaganda sent to the countryside and that which was disseminated in Paris. The former, he writes, "contained no political message, republican or monarchist, Left or Right", but the point was that, even in Paris (particularly in politically mixed "swing" *arrondissements*), Boulangerism was stunningly successful in concealing politics as patriotism and nationalism. However, the element of "associative composition", which linked Boulanger's name with that of everyone from Jesus Christ to Joan of Arc and Napoleons I and III, was employed with a rather greater degree of ingenuity (or disingenuousness) in the provinces.

As a historian, Burns is a self-confessed "truffle-hunter" and the greatest strength of

his book is his beautifully (often humorously) told stories of how national issues and conflicts were mediated by local concerns and customs. But his case about the fundamental "otherness" of the provinces isn't as watertight as he supposes.

First, the supposed irrelevance of Parisian "labels". Burns is sure that traditional political labels "obscure more than they instruct" when applied to the countryside. Where Boulangerism is concerned, I beg to differ. The fact that the General's propaganda became "confounded with the customary, commercial, and aesthetic" does not mean that politics was absent or even that it wasn't determinative of a peasant's action. If traditional labels were elided in the provinces, so they were in Paris: purposefully. That was the nature of Boulangerism, whether in the *banlieue*, the outbreak, or the *Île de la Cité*: it furthered its political agenda by garbing it in various forms of patriotism (not all of it revanchist, by any means). What most of Burns's stories illustrate is that provincials, no less than Parisians, based their politics on a fairly primitive calculation of material self-interest, and that most regions tended to act politically more or less as their forebears did.

Second, the matter of "otherness". Burns writes, "Rural responses to national events were, in a sense, works of art." But what response isn't, if by "art" you mean personal and/or local? All politics begins in this sense in anthropology, but it ends by giving collective (therefore generalizable) expression to individual desires. Burns unfolds wonderful tales of this or that individual (or individuals) *en province*, with the unmistakable implication that these particularities *per se* illustrate a profound alterity from what was going on, say, in the 5th, 6th, 17th or 20th *arrondissements* of the capital. Yet in Epinettes or Belleville, too, "larger" issues were getting translated into the problems of human beings far from innocent of particularities, not to mention conflicts with their neighbours.

Pleas for remembrance

Eugen Weber

OLIVIER BLANC
La Dernière Lettre: Prisons et condamnés de la
Révolution 1793-1794.
285pp. Paris: Laffont. 89fr.
2221 04204 2

What we describe as the Terror began with a decree of March 10, 1793, creating the Revolutionary Tribunal designed to administer a kind of political justice free from the ordinary rules of law. "Peoples", Robespierre explained, "do not judge like courts of law; they do not pass sentence; they cast a thunderbolt." In the war of Liberty against its foes, the government owed good citizens protection, "the enemies of the people only death". In 1793 and 1794, Liberty—Robespierre's Liberty, at any rate—stood at bay, threatened by external and internal foes, the one more dangerous than the other. To contemporary eyes, what seems remarkable about its struggle is the relative mansuetude it showed. Few thunderbolts were cast. The Paris Revolutionary Tribunal pronounced over 2,500 sentences of death: 381 of these in its first ten months, 1,370 during the last seven weeks that ended with July 1794.

Criminal anxieties

Michael Ignatieff

PHILIP JOHN STEAD
The Police of France
1789pp. Collier Macmillan. £12.95.
0 029 90820 8
GORDON WRIGHT
Between The Guillotine and Liberty: Two
centuries of the crime problem in France
290pp. Oxford University Press. £15.
0 19 503243 8
ROBERT A. NYE
Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern
France: The medical concept of national
decline
368pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£32.50.
0 691 05414 2

Each of the works under review exemplifies a distinct approach to the history of crime, police and punishment. Philip John Stead, a former Dean of Graduate Studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, provides a well-organized and straightforward account of the French police as an institution from the 1660s to the 1960s. The focus is on the evolution of an organization, the relations between *gendarmérie nationale* and *police nationale*, between police, magistracy and the Ministry of the Interior. The book has the metronome pace and the clarity of exposition one would expect from a distinguished former lecturer at police academies around the world; anyone seeking to understand how the French police operates today as an organization should consult this useful work. It will probably be more helpful to contemporary police-force training than as a history of the institution: the social and political context of policing is sketched in a perfunctory fashion. Eighteenth-century specialists, for example, will be disappointed that the author has so little to say about the word "police"—about the huge domain of administrative and executive functions implied by the word in eighteenth-century France.

Gordon Wright's rather puzzlingly titled *Between The Guillotine and Liberty* exemplifies a much broader, more fully historical approach to the problem of law and order. His range—from 1750 to the present—is as wide as Stead's, but his grasp of the intellectual and social context in which new law and order initiatives were taken is considerably subtler. It is the fullest account in English of the evolution of penal policy in France between Beccaria and Badinter. It is also the least ideological. Wright engages in a polite but sceptical dialogue with Michel Foucault throughout, gently pointing out the occasions when Foucault has passed off hypothesis as fact, retrospective attribution of purpose for motivating intention, and strategic conspiracy for the unfolding of unintended

consequence. As Wright observes sardonically: "Sometimes, in human affairs, things are what they seem."

Robert A. Nye's study of *Crime, Madness and Politics* between 1870 and 1914 is the most ambitious of the works under review and serves to illustrate some of the limitations in Wright's otherwise welcome common-sense scepticism towards excessive theorizing. For if it is the case in the history of crime that "things are what they seem", the problem for a historian is, as always, to know which "things" to look at. The debate about penal policy was never the hermetically sealed preserve of penal experts; attitudes to crime and punishment are structured, as Nye brilliantly shows, by the entire culture of class relations, national self-images and medical theories.

Constructing the field of relevant debates is the crucial theoretical task in a history of crime. Nye shows us how, above all by connecting thinking about crime and punishment to a much broader current of cultural anxiety about decadence and decline in Western European culture at the end of the nineteenth century. It is in this epistemic field of concern about national degeneracy that one can begin to draw together cultural phenomena which once seemed discrete: the Lombrosian theory of the criminal type, Lamarckian biological theories about the degenerative consequences of the transmission of acquired social characteristics, populationist anxiety about falling birth-rates and imperialist discourses on the eve of the First World War about the physical unfitness of working-class conscripts. In Nye's analysis, we discern a field of fears at work in late nineteenth-century France which saw the criminal "apache" as a symptom of a much more pervasive pattern of national degeneracy and decline. It is the immense influence of such fields of fear which helps to explain why crime panics bear so little direct correlation with the incidence of crime itself, why fear of crime floats free of the facts of crime.

The only reservation worth mentioning about this masterful cultural history of crime is that the degeneracy model tends to overlook the contradictions within social thought. Durkheim, for example, wrote about crime in ways that conform to Nye's model, but also in ways which contradict it. In *Selfishness* (1897), he warned his fellow citizens that crime and suicide originated in a pathological state which accompanies the march of civilization. Yet he also wrote, in other places, that crime was an entirely normal accompaniment of the civilizational process. In one register of analysis, Durkheim faithfully reproduces the social Lamarckianism of his time, while in another he writes against the tide of the enveloping cultural field. It is such difficulties of interpretation which make the placing of any individual within the mentalité of his age such a complex element of the historian's art.

inmates led, and the company they kept. As in most revolutionary situations, those singled out as enemies of the régime turn out a varied lot; the more so since the revolutionaries of one day quickly became the counter-revolutionaries of another.

In the prisons of the Terror (an appendix lists forty-four of them), cattle-drivers and peasant women wearing their "singular costumes" rubbed shoulders with ladies of fashion who tried hard to change their attire three times a day. Enemies spies and those who served the Committee of Public Safety, bankers who subsidized reaction or passed *émigrés* funds abroad, counterfeiterers and *ci-devant* conspirators, their families and their lovers, shared the dank cells and crowded corridors with innocents picked up by mistake and common-law criminals. Women are numerous, articulate and active in prison, as they had been to get there. Blanc mentions the actresses of the Comédie-Française imprisoned in September 1793 "for being hostile to the Revolution", who survived to be released after Thermidor. He does not say that they were jailed along with their male colleagues (a total cast of thirty-one) for having performed a regicidal adaptation of Richardson's *Pamela*, which presented the English and their Lords in too favourable a light at the very time when the Duke of York was trying to overrun the lands of the Republic.

Since a decree of November 1793 required the better-off to pay for their poorer fellows, the food was often surprisingly adequate, although it had to be eaten with a spoon: knives and forks were banned. Jailers were rough types, often alcoholic, but seldom cruel. The letters mention individual acts of kindness that made the prisoner's life more easy. Bribery was rife, which meant that wives, mistresses, small children, sometimes slipped in; and prisoners out, though very, very rarely. There were official visits too, chiefly by men of law: useless public defenders bent on squeezing out

what cash they could: more effective *notaires* or *hommes d'affaires* who helped spirit away the property of victims, otherwise forfeit to the state.

Individuals might perish, but kin endured. Desperate attempts were made to save family property by legal conveyance before condemnation or, failing that, to commit suicide before a conviction should entail its loss. In the absence of knives, nails, poison, broken glass, shattering one's head against a wall or jumping out of windows were all attempted, but too often failed. When one nobleman died before he could pass in judgment, the jailer wrote to ask Fouquier if the dead man could not be tried anyway, so that his goods should remain confiscated.

The missives here reprinted were penned by royalists and republicans, aristocrats and Jacobins (and Girondins, of course), book sellers, printers, priests, prostitutes, speculators, gamblers, brokers, innkeepers, ship-chandlers, navy and army officers, policemen, informers, a feminist (Olympe de Gouges), even by Fouquier-Tinville himself about to get his comeuppance some months after Thermidor brought an end first to his functions, then to him.

Though sometimes grave, their tone is seldom dejected. One of the most painful things about them is the thought that those for whom they were meant never knew of them. Many quote Corneille: "Crime shames, not the scaffold." Others invoke the Supreme Being, though few seem to believe in an after-life. The letters include little poems, business advice, thanks, expressions of affection, fear, forgiveness, defiance, hatred, resignation, pathetic attempts to save or to pass on some chattel: lockets, portraits, locks of hair. Above all they express concern for the family and pleas for remembrance: do not forget me, don't let children and friends forget me Across the centuries, Olivier Blanc has answered that plea at last.



Order and Artifice in Hume's Political Philosophy

Frederick G. Whelan

While acknowledging the strong liberal affinities of certain of Hume's positions, this book emphasizes the essential conservatism of his skepticism and unifies his political theory to the whole of his philosophy. \$45.50 (U.S.)

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Cast to the ground

Geraint H. Jenkins

DAVID STEPHENSON
The Governance of Gwynedd
257pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
£17.95.
07083 08503
GARETH ELWYN JONES
Modern Wales: A concise history c.1485-1979
364pp. Cambridge University Press.
£22.50 (paperback, £7.95).
0521 242320
JAN MORRIS
The Matter of Wales: Epic views of a small country
442pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0192158465

During the thirteenth century a distraught English soldier, encamped in the fastnesses of Wales, wrote, "we dwell here in watchings and fastings, in prayer, in cold and nakedness". As the Wales of today finds itself afflicted by a monstrous economic and cultural blight there are many Welshmen who air such sentiments daily. Apart from social security offices, old people's homes and folk museums, the study of Welsh history is just about the only growth industry in "Gwallia Deserta". The scale of the dislocation has clearly begun to stir old nostalgias and it may well be that the Welsh people are reaching out to the past in a bid to explain or even assuage present predicaments. It would indeed be comforting to believe, with Simone Weil, that renewal can come from the past "if we love it".

Studies in Welsh History is a series which has already yielded a rich crop of monographs on such diverse subjects as monastic houses, the roots of Methodism, the Bute Estate and the Welsh Quarrymen's Union. The fifth and present volume, written by David Stephenson, provides a critical analysis of the government of the miniature feudal state of Gwynedd during the time of those heroic and steadfast princes, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, in the thirteenth century. The rulers of Aberffraw employed an élite of hard-headed and ubiquitous ministerial servants and administrators who were charged with the task of securing the loyalty of numerous petty lords, subjecting them to intensive financial pressures and deploying cash, men and arms effectively. These enormously complex problems were tackled with ruthless drive, immense energy and masterly improvisation. The extension of princely authority, however, ultimately contained the seeds of disaster. For the attempts of the Welsh princes and their servants to harness to their will the resources of their lands and people and to maximize profits created internal tensions which led to the collapse of the royal house of Gwynedd. Welshmen who had found Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's unbending rule too hard to bear staffed the armies which brought him down. With his death in 1282, according to *Bruil y Tywysogion*, "all Wales was cast to the ground".

This cannot have been an easy book for a young scholar to write. The manuscript material is scanty, scattered and often unreliable; it also bristles with technical difficulties. Stephenson is to be congratulated; therefore, for mastering a mass of complex detail and producing a meticulous and thorough piece of work. The pitfalls and obstacles which faced medieval administrators, together with the

interrelations of power and principle, are particularly well covered. He questions a number of traditional assumptions and although I am not competent to contest his interpretation it seems to me that his work is both original and challenging. Readers venturing into this field for the first time should not be deterred by the bulky footnotes or the intricacies of *cych, tywnc* and *cornage*, for this is an exceptionally well-written book.

Gareth Jones's book is the first one-volume synthesis of the history of Wales from 1485 to the present day since the magisterial work of David Williams, first published in 1950. He has taken on an enormously difficult task, for some would argue that it is simply impossible for any historian, however gifted, to discuss complex events over a period of five centuries in a short compass of some 300 pages.

It is to Jones's credit that he has produced a clear, crisp and thoroughly sensible narrative which will prove a real boon to students and

general readers. His sections on the social and economic background, in so far as they are up to date and full of fresh perspectives, are especially commendable, and few historians have brought out so clearly how radical Nonconformity and massive industrial developments irrevocably changed the lives of thousands of people and swept Wales into the modern era. But although the author's conclusions are eminently sound it is a pity that so much of the life, colour and vigour of the past has been squeezed out of the text. I do wish that the interesting primary material tucked away in the appendixes had been incorporated into the text. History is so much more exciting when there are clouds of witnesses to be seen and heard.

The Matter of Wales is vintage Jan Morris: a genuinely original and, in patches, scintillating book written, one presumes, for the benefit of the intelligent Englishman who is ignorant of Wales and also for the less sentient Saxon who



One of Paul Wakefield's photographs from Jan Morris's *The Matter of Wales*, reviewed on this page.

Celtic discomforts

Michael Hurst

WYNFORD VAUGHAN-THOMAS
Wales: A history
266pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95.
07181 24685

GWYN A. WILLIAMS
When was Wales? A history of the Welsh
327pp. Black Raven Press. £12.95.
0851590039

Whatever the precise degree of homogenization in contemporary British society, the most pessimistic of Welshmen would not be justified in wringing his hands and dubbing the condition of his people that of "Under Sour Milk Wood". Few European nations dwell within so well-defined an area not an island, and behind so richly historic a frontier. Very few have evolved (through largely peaceful processes) from being a conquered people to partnership with their vastly preponderant neighbour. Even fewer were destined to be part of a sustained economic miracle. And however much the severity of change imposed by the historical process may currently appear to have brought discomfort, similar periods of drastic restructuring in the past have resulted in substantial overall benefit. Both of these books provide

ample evidence of that. It is the most vital of all their key points, and has to be emphasized at the outset; first, because Gwyn Williams concludes his outstandingly perceptive work on a deeply pessimistic note; second, on account of the almost indecent haste and cursiveness with which Wynford Vaughan-Thomas takes his reader through the twentieth century. The one, having coped with, even gloated over, change in Wales during many centuries, somehow cannot cope when time will not stand still for him. The other, for reasons which remain obscure, does not deign to ponder upon his times - or their immediate predecessors.

The Williams approach - a series of switch-back rides moving now forwards, now backwards - yields some splendid results. All becomes clear, and usually most illuminatingly so, in the end. With Vaughan-Thomas we go on a stately and comfortable jaunt, a lengthy list of dates to hand. The zest and untidiness of the first approach prove highly valuable in projecting the unknown quantities, ever-shifting situations and seemingly endless variations of affairs in the centuries before Bosworth Field: rivalries between princes, Saxon ravagings, Irish depredations, Norman enormities, commotions in commotes and cantreds, Marcher subtleties, ecclesiastical rows, proto-patriotic movements, English conquest, or the build-up of Cymru-choking castles. Williams plays his words to great effect, always hitting the psychological nails on the head; getting the power proportions deftly right; and therefore providing a sufficient completeness of scene and explanation. With less space, but a large array of photographs, Vaughan-Thomas does well. Cumulation, however, makes Williams a winner.

Tudors and Stuarts turn out at about level pegging. Both authors have grasped the workings of the Henrician state and Church; both rightly stress the vital nature of the Irish Catholic factor in consolidating Anglo-Welsh co-operation during the crises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Neither fails to make all the basic points about the Civil War, the Restoration and 1688. At all times the different sort of Wales produced by the varying concatenations of circumstance is successfully

views his Cymric neighbours with a mixture of condescension and contempt and who, like Herbert Asquith, would "sooner go to hell than visit Wales. Fired by the ideals of Owain Glyndwr, Morris discusses the subtleties and nuances of Welshness with considerable skill and insight. Hers is a Wales peopled in the past by courageous and unsung heroes, fervent patriots, bizarre radicals, eccentric scions and madcap clergymen.

Morris possesses the born writer's sense of time, place and character. No recent work on Wales has so effectively captured the smells, sounds and sights of the past and the present. Some of her descriptions of moorlands, coot-tips or even cultural traditions linger long in the memory. Strict metre poetry, she enthuses, has been the whetstone or the scaffold "against which its energies have been strung and tautened, like the struts upon which the Catherine wheel spins around its nail, splitting sparks into the night". The countenance and soul of Saunders Lewis, the outstanding Welsh scholar of our day, are captured in a phrase: "fierce burning eyes beneath a high, high brow, face intense with anguish or lyricism". There are, inevitably perhaps, weaknesses: the book is untidy, digressive and maddening; Morris's touch as a historian is seldom sure; she loves riddles, legends and rhymes more than sober facts; she often elevates the idiosyncratic and buries the significant; she misspells quotations, place-names, persons and even the names of Welsh dogs; and she delights in useless detail (who wants to know that the menagerie elephant buried behind the Talbot Hotel in Tregaron in 1848 died of lead poisoning?).

Yet these are all surely forgivable faults. To Jan Morris, and indeed to many of us who inhabit this obscure, neglected but wonderful nation, Wales is not "a country in the world's backside" or "a geographical expression" but rather "a country of the heart".

and sometimes brilliantly, delineated. On into the eighteenth century, Vaughan-Thomas draws well ahead. Never to set out a crucial development as if it were reducible to an itemized shopping list certainly reduces the danger of boredom, but, equally certainly, it may lay clearly low. Williams comes near to danger on Edward I and the conquest. On Methodism he reaches his low point. All the older, "harder" Nonconformist bodies get their due and more. Yet the paramount denomination and the nature of its entry into and triumph over Wales receive short and inadequate shrift. On the Industrial Revolution, rather over-emphatic talk about "colonialism" verges on the silly. At one point English capitalists are accused of splitting up a highly varied society - something by its nature already split. With the nineteenth-century sections come a number of wildly overdramatic accounts occasionally reminiscent of a local newspaper. The mood of the paragraphs dealing with the tithe struggles of the 1890s is one more appropriate to an account of the incipient stages of the Jacobite Rebellions.

On the other hand, the great bulk of Williams's accounts of the basic industrial changes and their social consequences is excellent. So are the analyses of the "Welshness" phenomena, be they Anglican and Tory, or "popular" in inspiration. Both authors present Welsh politics in generally accurate early nineteenth-century context. But while their treatment of the growth of democratic power has strengths, it relies too much on the old clichés about the effects in Wales of the 1867 Reform Act. The Conservatives did virtually as well in 1874 as in 1865 so far as Commons seats went. 1880 was the true start of their lasting eclipse under the wider franchise. Over the late-Victorian and twentieth-century political stretches Williams alone writes to full effect. For the most part his penetration is startlingly deep. Then, at the last, his sense of proportion (invariably a little at risk on things modern) deserts him and despair sets in. One is uncomfortable, too, with the poetic flights, and the languages of the pit and the pulpit: it is a pity that with occasional hisings about cultural genocide comes the higher logic of the picket line.

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The price of loyalty

Hugh Brogan

CARL SOLBERG
Hubert Humphrey: A biography
572pp. Norton. £17.95.
0 393 01806 7

Frank Capra's *Mr Smith Goes To Washington* was on British television during the Christmas holiday. The politics in this entertaining film are preposterous, but Capra poses irresistibly the question that dogged the career of Hubert Humphrey: can a good man enter Congress, keep his innocence, and defeat the villains? The film, unconvincingly, says Yes; Humphrey's biography (if not his biographer) regretfully but firmly says No.

Mr Humphrey went to Washington in 1949 with a great reputation as a committed, effective liberal. He never quite lost this distinction, but he fell far short of what he might have achieved. Carl Solberg shows us why. He has a great admiration for his subject, but he pulls no punches (except, perhaps, in his summing-up, where presumably he felt free to err on the side of generosity).

The central tragedy of Humphrey's career was his capture by Lyndon Johnson. Mr Solberg tells the story with scrupulous honesty, from the day in 1964 when Humphrey was offered the vice-presidency, to his closest friends' dismay ("We said Johnson would cut his balls off") until the symbolic moment during the 1968 presidential campaign when Humphrey stopped displaying the vice-presidential seal on his television appearances. The trouble was twofold. In the first place, Humphrey accepted the vice-presidency only because it seemed to be his one sure route to the White House. This put him at a moral disadvantage.

A domestic universe

Pearl K. Bell

SCOTTELLEDGE
E. B. White: A biography
400pp. Norton. £19.95.
0 393 01711 0

E. (for Elwyn) B. (for Brooks) White is a rare bird in the world of American letters, a wonderfully gifted writer with a perfect sense of his own limits. He has always known how far he can reach, how much he can grasp, and has quietly eschewed the grandiose excursions of lesser talents. Although, in three enormously successful books for children, he proved himself an incomparable story-teller, White has never been tempted by big, important, let alone "experimental" novels or plays or poems. He has devoted himself in the main to the essay, a literary form whose demands are less modest than they may seem, though he has had no illusions about its unexalted rank in present-day American literature.

For White, the essayist's self-imposed role of "second-class citizen" is liberating, for "he can pull on any sort of shirt, be any sort of person, according to his mood or his subject-matter—philosopher, scold, jester, raconteur, confidant, pundit, devil's advocate, enthusiast". In the forty-odd years that E. B. White contributed regularly to the *New Yorker*, whose staff he joined in 1927, he used the essayist's freedom to roam wherever he pleased not only in the concise editorials of the "Notes and Comments" section of the magazine but also in more substantial pieces that moved, with seeming ease through an engaging variety of thoughts and people, places and things, including that remarkable machine, the Model T Ford, the obdurate temperament of a much-loved dachshund, Senator Joseph McCarthy, vanishing railroads, the Cold War, and the pollution of our planet.

Meditative, witty, full of metaphorical delights, the essays White contributed to the *New Yorker* were informed by his characteristic mingling of the plain-spoken and the eloquent, and it is easy to understand why Harold Ross, the magazine's founder and editor (until his death in 1951), considered him indispensable. Yet there is a paradox here, while the *New*

Second, L.B.J. exacted from him a pledge of "complete and unswerving" loyalty. Fair enough; but it did not occur to him, nor, apparently, to Humphrey, that loyalty should be reciprocal. Humphrey should have exacted from Johnson a pledge that he would never be required to sacrifice his self-respect. He did not do so, and Johnson, noting this hint of weakness, exploited it with the drive and insight of a master sadist. He reduced the man whom J.K. Galbraith called "reckless, quixotic, dangerous Humphrey", the most creative nifty-maker of his generation, to a posturing ninny with dyed hair, who proclaimed the "politics of joy" just after the murder of Martin Luther King, and kissed his wife's image on the television screen when the news of his nomination to the presidency arrived, while riot and wreckage filled the streets of Chicago twenty-five storeys below him.

Solberg makes the most of this fascinating psychological material. He touches on Humphrey's naive good nature (in spite of all the evidence, he never could believe that Johnson and Nixon were as nasty as they seemed), on his subservience to father-figures, arising probably from the way his actual father had brought him up, and on his rubbery egoism, which made his quest for the presidency seem to him a matter of such excellent importance as to justify any compromise or surrender of principle. But Solberg also recognizes that in the last reckoning Humphrey's successes and failures cannot be accounted for by psychological analysis alone.

His thesis is that for the past hundred years at least the United States has been an essentially conservative country, in which "Progressive" impulses have always lacked staying power. Humphrey was lucky enough to ride the last wave of the New Deal, first into the mayoralty of Minneapolis and then into the Senate. His

brashness and liberalism at first alienated the Senatorial establishment of Republicans and Southern conservatives, but his warmth of heart, bubbling energy and powerful intelligence soon won him a position of rapidly increasing authority. Solberg quotes Nelson Polsby for the view that Humphrey was the first "modern" Senator—"creator, innovator, educator, using his place and prominence to define issues for the wider public" and knowing how to translate those issues into law. Priority in this respect might as plausibly be claimed for, say, Estes Kefauver, but there can be no doubt that Humphrey played his role incomparably. When the next Progressive wave began to mount, during the Kennedy presidency, Humphrey was uniquely well placed to exploit it, and for a few years did so, from his proper place as majority whip (and *de facto* majority leader) in the Senate. It was his skill and influence, as much as anything, which got the proposals of the New Frontier and the Great Society into the law books. His greatest achievement was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Then the vice-presidency swallowed him up, the reaction against Vietnam and the civil rights revolution set in, and the wave ebbed even more rapidly than it had flowed.

Humphrey never got over this, and although he returned to the Senate in 1970, and did more good work there (of which Solberg might have told us more) he could not re-create his old position in politics, no doubt in part because he began to suffer from the cancer which killed him prematurely in January, 1978.

Solberg's picture is valid as far as it goes, but a non-American may reasonably feel that it lets off the Progressive mentality too lightly. Humphrey and his fellow liberals from the prairies may have been less conservative than, say, an Ohio Republican such as Robert A. Taft (not hard); they were no less America-centred. For

instance, Solberg speaks glowingly several times of Humphrey's achievement in persuading Congress to allow the export of American farm produce to Third World countries in return for local currency. This was certainly a good idea, in the short run, for the farm lobby, but being only a sophisticated form of dumping it greatly damaged Third World economies while subjecting them more and more firmly to American interests; which surely proves that whatever Bryan, and La Follette, and Henry Wallace (Humphrey's early hero) and Humphrey himself may have thought and taught, the farm lobby is essentially no more virtuous than any other.

American liberalism of the Humphrey stripe is full of such contradictions, which is why the charge against its latest champion, Walter Mondale, that he was the creature of special interests, was so damaging. Liberals ought to stand for more than that; and they ought to be clean. Yet it emerged during the Watergate affair that even Humphrey and his circle had dabbled in influence-peddling. Humphrey, coming from dairy country, thought that taking money from the milk lobby was as innocuous as taking it from a church, but it was milk money which got one of his campaign managers sent to prison for four months. There was trouble in 1984 about Mrs Ferraro's tax-returns and about Mondale's campaign finances. As Senator Russell Long has remarked, "there is almost a hair line's difference" between a campaign contribution and a bribe.

The moral of all this would seem to be that American liberals, in spite of wide popular support, will bob along helplessly in the wake of American conservatives until they can put their house and their ideas in order. Carl Solberg's life of Humphrey should prove very useful in driving the point home.

dead-end jobs, and after a leisurely trip by car across the country—in, of course, a Model T Ford—came to rest in Seattle, where he began a column for the local paper, in the tradition of such nineteenth and twentieth-century American humorists as Franklin P. Adams, Eugene Field and Don Marquis. As White's biographer points out, such columns—pot-pourris of jokes, funny poems, random anecdotes, and amusing commentary projecting an amiable personality—were "an important part of the history of American literary humour, which had its roots in American journalism", from Artemus Ward and Mark Twain down to the "Notes and Comment" of the *New Yorker*. The American counterpart to the European *feuilleton*, these columns were much less literary and serious. What earned the devotion of readers was the columnist's ability to poke fun at himself as well as at the world around him.

Back in New York, Andy White (the nickname from his Cornell days) was still "a young man living a life of exalted footlessness", as he described his younger self years later, but soon began selling brief pieces to a new and struggling magazine, the *New Yorker*—informal accounts of personal misfortunes and triumphs; wry observations about life in the city. Harold Ross and his formidable right-hand, Katherine Angell (whom White married a few years later), realized immediately that this young writer of "casuals" was exactly what the magazine needed for its editorials; for the "snappers", or punch-lines, appended to "newsbreaks" (the grammatical stumbles, typos, and assorted idiosyncrasies culled from contemporaries that are used to fill out a column); indeed, for any department, since "there was practically no purpose to which words could be put that White was unable to master".

Though White had a permanent dislike of office routine, resented the iron tug of weekly deadlines, and had to shake free of New York and the *New Yorker* once in a while to clear his head, he remained one of the defining strengths of the magazine for many years. After he moved to Maine, he wrote many thoughtful and charming essays (usually headed "Letter from the East") about his drastically altered life as an "animal husbandry" man, placed with sober reflection "sometimes whimsical, even sentimental" about politi-

cians, nuclear arms, and such vanished pleasures of a simpler time as the black iron stove and the children's magazine *St Nicholas*. Perhaps the greatest delight of White's longer essays is provided not by his political or environmental concerns—the ideas, if not the feeling, seem thin—but by his portraits of animals, particularly a "dissolute dachshund" named Fred who, seven years after his death, still scratched impudently at his master's memory.

[Fred] always attended the sick, climbing right into bed with the patient like some lecherous old physician, and making a bad situation worse. [Lying on the bed, bird-watching] he managed to give the impression that he was a secret agent of the Department of Justice. . . . His was the devotion of an opportunist. . . . The word "faithful" is an adjective I simply never thought of in connection with Fred. He differed from most dogs in that he tended to knock down, rather than build up, the master's ego. . . . The only time he was ever discovered in an attitude that suggested affection was when I was in the driver's seat. . . . and he would lay his heavy head on my right knee. This, I soon perceived, was not affection, it was nausea.

No one—not Thurber, not J. R. Ackerley, not Barbara Woodhouse—has brought dogs to life in words as richly appreciative, ironic and impatient as E. B. White's. Though he anthropomorphizes Fred (as well as geese, mosquitoes, raccoons and roosters) with a free and reckless hand, his dachshund remains a dog; Fred does not turn into a strangely misshapen four-legged human, like the dogs of James Thurber.

Scott Ellledge tells us that White is still actively devoted to the domestic order of his country universe, but his writing is confined almost entirely to correspondence. If Ellledge's conscientious account of this endearingly decent man seems on the whole rather pedestrian—all the facts are there, but he has little to offer in the way of opinion or judgment—the fault lies partly with his subject. It is hard to tell the story of a life whose liveliest and most dramatic events have taken place inside the writer's head, where intelligence and imagination have worked their mysterious transformations. Only the rarest of biographers can do justice to the act of writing as an adventure full of hazard, elation and despair. Otherwise, the man's work remains the best record of his years.

Invitations to surrender

Douglas Dunn

HART CRANE
Complete Poems
Edited by Broom Weber
222pp. Bloomsbury. Paperback, £4.95.
0906 42765 7

It was on Saturday that Hart did his cannibal dance. Afterward, with the nail keg still perched on his head, he sat by the lilacs in the doorway, meditatively emptying a box of salt on the phonograph. Somely he glanced up at a tree that seemed to be rooted in the dazzling blue sky. Caroline Tate, pregnant and stark sober, heard him repeating time and again: "Where the cedar leaf divides the sky...where the cedar leaf divides the sky...I was promised an improved infancy." On Sunday afternoon, the third day of the party, Hart finally attained the state of exultation in which he was able to write, or put together, one of his more difficult poems.

Malcolm Cowley's anecdote of Hart Crane at an extended Fourth of July party in 1925 (it can be found in *A Second Flowering*) is as illuminating as it is comic. Crane's summer antics apart, though, the poem beginning in his mind as he dribbled salt on the record player was "Passage".

"Where the cedar leaf divides the sky" is a remarkable opening line. Equally memorable is the notion contained in "I was promised an improved infancy". This is how the first verse of "Passage" goes:

Where the cedar leaf divides the sky
I heard the sea.
In sapphire arenas of the hills
I was promised an improved infancy.

The third line is close to being precious, and "sapphire" is a word that recurs several times in *White Buildings* and at least once in *The Bridge*. It seems an almost deliberately ornate interruption to the lyric spaciousness of those lines that Caroline Tate overheard the poet repeating to himself. Indeed, the rest of "Passage" fulfils the promise of elaboration set up by "sapphire arenas", encrusting with wilful wordage whatever drama a reader might suspect the poem possesses. Like so much of Hart Crane's poetry, "Passage" has a moment, or a complicated space which the poet has laboured to fill, but it does not have a narrative. If curiously aspiring, it is even more curiously static.

Broom Weber, the editor of this new *Complete Poems*, claims that interest in Crane's work has been unflagging, and that it has been spared "the traditional pattern of hasty neglect and overdue revival". Even so, in listing studies of Crane, he fails to mention Louis Unterecker's big biography (1969) or R. W. B. Lewis's study of the poems (1967). But in Britain at least, Crane's work seems to be a prime case of "neglect"—though it is more likely that it does not answer to very many of the demands of British writers or readers over the past couple of decades.

Many readers of Crane's poetry have withdrawn from it exasperated by its obscurity while admitting to its voluptuous power, its full-mouthed resonance, and even admitting that it is wonderfully anthologizable—not poems from the works, however, so much as lines and phrases from poems. As in the marine terms of "Voyages", Crane's diction only seems to cohere; for the usual sense-making procedures of language are in his poetry, secondary to incantation and rhapsody, a manner of writing in which sensation is more important than sense. Time and again, Crane's overwrought words give the impression of having been compiled rather than written and of the artificiality of the performance being given greater prominence than the languages of poetry might permit. Artificiality and a lack of restraint can only produce effects which are artificial and unrestrained. If the latter by itself is a virtue—it is a mistake to overrate the calculated and discerning styles of present-day poetry—both together can result in something as barbaric as it is exotic. Lines like these, for instance, carry a tremendous noise when spoken aloud:

All fragrance irretrievably, and claim
Madly meeting logically at this hour
And again that is ours to wrestle again,
Fortunate eyes and lips and making told
The channel port and portion of our June
Shall they not stain and close in our own steps

Bright staves of flowers and quills today as I
Must first be lost in fatal tides to tell?

Picking through for some idea of what is going on in them, however, for a clue as to what, with scant regard for syntax, is being asked, is likely to reveal them as preposterous—although it is at least arguable that straightforward elucidation of Crane's verse is neither what it invites nor what a reader should do with it. In these poems that may not have been "written" but "put together" (as Malcolm Cowley tactfully suggests) it might be wiser to see what can be seen, to listen, to surrender to the poem unhindered. That, I feel, is what Crane's poems invite. Understandably, perhaps, it is what many readers are unwilling to accept. As a consequence, Crane is usually remembered in snatches brilliant enough to prevent his dismissal:

Metlicious, past midnight in clear time,
Infrangible and lonely, smooth as though cast
Together in one merciless white blade—
The bay estuaries flock the hard sky limits

—or, say, for the convincing music, albeit with formal difficulties of meaning, of the final section of "Voyages".

From scene to fiery scene

Jay Parini

GALWAY KINNELL
Selected Poems
148pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0 436 23410 6
CHARLES WRIGHT
Country Music: Selected early poems
157pp. Wesleyan University Press. \$17
(paperback, \$8.95).
0 8193 5066 3

Galway Kinnell writes in the tradition of the American sublime, and remains one of the strongest voices of his generation. His *Selected Poems*, which recently won a Pulitzer Prize, is culled from six volumes written over a span of nearly four decades, and represents Kinnell at his best; the poems convey the jagged innocence and elemental power for which he has become famous. The poet of the American sublime seeks, as ever, to become Emerson's famous "transparent eyeball", seeing everything and nothing, feeling the currents of "Universal Being" circulate through him. Kinnell stands directly in the line of American poets: from Emerson and Whitman to Roethke and Ammons.

He has brought to this tradition, though, his own special intensity. Unlike most of his contemporaries in the late 1940s and 50s, Kinnell is unselfconsciously expansive, and sometimes prolific. His most important poem of this period, included in *What a Kingdom It Was* (1960), is "The Avenue Bearing the Initial of Christ into the New World", a rich evocation of life along Avenue C in New York's lower East Side. Kinnell uses multiple dialects, a variety of verse forms, and a sonorous rhetoric in pursuit of his theme, survival through purgation. He declares that "everything / That may abide, the fire was made to go through the fire / And it was clean". This poem is one of *The Waste Land's* distant cousins, of course; Kinnell's Fire Sermon, like Eliot's, looks forward to the possibility of redemption: "I don't know what you died of", says a character in *Black Light*, Kinnell's only novel; "Whatever it was, that is what will bring you alive again."

Kinnell's first two books anticipate the major phase represented by *Body Rags* (1968) and *The Book of Nightmares* (1971). The poet-hero of these poems, which are usually long sequences of narrative lyrics, walks out in a northern, primitive landscape (that, especially in *The Book of Nightmares*, becomes a dream landscape). He is a prophet, staring wide-eyed at a natural world full of emblems; as in "The Bear", his most famous poem, which recounts in graphic detail the tracking and eating of the totemic animal by a primitive hunter. Few poems written in the post-war period equal "The Bear" for sheer cumulative power. It is a poem about death and resurrection; the transformations of flesh into spirit and reincarnation.

In *The Bear*—is excellent, and to the point

Not all of Crane's work is evocative of things that are hard to see through a clutter of words. *White Buildings* (1926) also contained the splendid and exhilarating "Sunday Morning Apples" and the affecting poem "My Grandmother's Love Letters". It was probably in the order of things that the purity and simple strength of these two poems should not have determined Crane's development as a poet. His authentically perilous temperament, his ambition and his reliance on states of exultation had already produced "For the Marriage of Faust and Helen", as well as "Voyages", "The Wine Menagerie" and "Passage". What may have been essentially a lyric gift opted for bigger things, perhaps to the detriment of both man and talent.

Certainly, *The Bridge* is the poem in which the most convincing passages of Crane's passionately declamatory verse are to be found. There is greater technical skill, too, a more assured swing to his extravagance. Was there ever a less thrifty poet? Some of the lines which reflect urban squalor are remarkable:

John, Jake or Charley, hopping the slow freight
— Memphis to Tallahassee—riding the rods,
Blind fists of nothing....

Lines and phrases of intensely realized poetry make *The Bridge* a staggering poem to read, even when meaning is elusive or when what seems to be evoked gets lost beneath Crane's verbal enamelling. It contains magnificence of line and phrase and, at times, an almost mesmeric energy, but it also offers some of the worst writing imaginable:

Outspoken buttocks in pink beads
Invite the necessary cloudy clench
Of bawdy eyes....

Crane's method was not to name his subject, but to portray or embody it, conjuring it up in a form of extreme disguise. His poetry seems drawn less from life than from an ambitiously distorted vision, owing more to "Poetry" with a capital "P" than anything else.

Almost half of the new *Complete Poems*, which brings Crane back into print in Britain, is made up of work uncollected in Crane's lifetime, including poems hitherto only available in relatively recent limited editions and until now not published elsewhere. The new material is interesting and good to have but it hardly alters our perspective on Crane or his work.

crete set of symbols develops in a limited, recognizable context. Again like Stevens, Wright has learnt a good deal from the French symbolists.

The rose in the above poem benefits from the connotations which word and flower invoke, especially when juxtaposed with the "blood stars" that occur at Easter, suggestive of a "redemption past pain". In the course of five books, Wright has relied increasingly on traditional Christian imagery and symbolism, but these are always given his own startling twists. The fingernail and eyelash, for instance, that bring the Easter poem to a climax, seem puzzling at first glance. In effect, Wright is saying what poets have always said: trust in the physical world; it is man's point of access to the spiritual realm. In Wright's deeply encoded world, "God is the sleight-of-hand in the fireweed, the lost / Moment that stopped to grieve and moved on . . .".

He began writing poems when he lived in Italy under the shadow of his master, Pound, and, more than most contemporary poets, he sees himself in direct succession from the great Modernists; like them, he has no trouble with poems that are difficult, allusive, majestic; he allows more high rhetoric in his poems than is commonly thought desirable nowadays.

Of the first four books, *China Trace* (1977) contains the best work. In it (by the title, to start with) Wright pays homage to spiritual masters of the East. His poems had always been short, sharply concrete, imagistic—much like Pound's translations in *Cathey*; these qualities are intensified in *China Trace*. A mysticism rooted in the natural world is characteristic of this work, as in "Reply in Chi K'ang":

There is no light for us at the end of the light.
No one redeems the grass our shadows lie on.

Each night, in its handful of sleep, the mimosa blooms.

Each night the future forgives.

Inside us, albino roots are starting to take hold.

The old rhetoric occasionally breaks out, as in "I mimic the tongues of green flame in the grass. / I live in the one world, the moth and rust in my arms." But, in general, one expects from Wright a measured lyricism, film-like imagery, natural symbols that gather weight as he repeats them, trying them out in fresh contexts, from poem to poem. Wright, for all his difficulty, is the real thing.

Robert Creeley: *The Poet's Workshop* (383pp. Orono, Maine: National Poetry Foundation. \$25; paperback, \$15.95) is the first of a projected series modelled on the "Man and Poet" books from the same publisher. In this volume a breathless and breathtakingly unembarrassed introduction by the editor Carroll F. Terrell is followed by essays from various hands on, among other topics, Creeley's "Epistemopoietic Path", his "Poetics of Duration", his relations with Charles Olson and Irving Layton, and "Robert Creeley and the Tradition".

Types for the times

Rosemary Ashton

SUZANNE GRAVER
George Eliot and Community: A study in social theory and fictional form
340pp. University of California Press. £22.70.
0520 048024

This book adds greatly to the stock of critical thought about the relation of George Eliot's novels to the social thinking of the nineteenth century. Suzanne Graver shows George Eliot in relation not only to like-minded contemporaries—Mill, Spencer, Comte, and Lewis—but also to an important social thinker whose works she could not know, Ferdinand Tönnies, who initiated a way of describing social change by the use of two terms which formed the title of his influential study of 1887, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Society). The connection between George Eliot's way of writing about problems of social change and social inertia—or, in Herbert Spencer's terms, social dynamics and social statics—and Tönnies's altogether more abstract pair of terms is presented persuasively, and only occasionally pushed too far.

Problems of the pulses

Thomas Docherty

PHILIP M. WEINSTEIN
The Semantics of Desire: Changing models of identity from Dickens to Joyce
310pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £30.10.
0691 065942

There is an important divergence in contemporary critical theory between "oppositional criticism" and a kind of "New Enthusiasm". Oppositional criticism (as recommended by Edward Said) proceeds from the premise that, in critical reading, "disinterestedness" is impossible: there must be active, even wilful, critical consciousness "if there are to be issues, problems, values, even lives to be fought for". New Enthusiasm recommends passivity of the will and a "relaxation" of critical consciousness which it construes as a locus of "unnatural" ideological bias and interest.

Philip M. Weinstein's confused examination of the identity and "freedom" of literary protagonists strays lamely and blindly into this "enthusiastic" and wildly optimistic approach. For Weinstein, the task of criticism is to achieve "the most intimate relation possible to the creative voice at the heart of the work. This intimacy . . . depends upon a critical surrender to the entity being approached." High praise is given to writing which nearly silences the critic and is "almost beyond commentary"; and the ultimate accolade to *Ulysses* is that "We must be patient enough to become en-

Tönnies's definition is carefully summarized by Graver. *Gemeinschaft* refers to "local, organic, agricultural communities that are modelled on the family and rooted in the traditional and the sacred". By *Gesellschaft*, Tönnies means "urban, heterogeneous, industrial societies that are culturally sophisticated and shaped by the rational pursuit of self-interest in a capitalist and secular environment". Suzanne Graver reminds us that in Tönnies's system, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are "ideal types", and as such "not fully realized by any group; rather, the opposite poles they define are standards by which reality may be described and understood". In other words (and here there may be a lack of contextual knowledge on Graver's part) Tönnies stands in that German philosophical tradition from Kant through Schiller to Hegel, in which pairs of terms are taken as opposites (for example, *naïve* and *sentimental* to describe types of literature) which are understood to be useful conceptual models rather than historically observed entities. Such opposite concepts may on occasion be seen to have been embodied in actual societies at actual historical moments, but it is not their definition or justification to have been so embodied. So for those German

veloped, to submit to its matricial authority." The historical trajectory of the English novel is then adduced in corroboration of this proposed surrender. Weinstein's thesis is that there has been an intensification of interest in the physical body of protagonists, and a movement towards discovering subjective and carnal experience as the sole ground of truth, value and, ultimately, "freedom". "Semantics, signification, and culture" were dominant in mid-Victorian novels; Modernism is organized around the "opposite" poles of "desire, force, natural impulse". None of these terms is ever considered theoretically or critically. Available work on desire, for instance (notably by René Girard and Julia Kristeva), is dismissed in footnotes, without being engaged in argument. "Cultural models of identity" are never related to any real historical culture in England (or elsewhere).

Amid such vagueness, argument becomes assertion. According to Weinstein, mid-Victorians (represented here by Dickens and Eliot) privilege culture and "imagine the protagonist becoming himself—achieving freedom" through (in the case of Dickens) "prudent" conformity to authority. Modernists (Joyce and Lawrence) privilege nature by affirming the desire of protagonists and ignoring "external" cultural ideology. "Freedom is possible in both these positions"; but Weinstein prefers Modernist freedom, which marks a movement from "narratives of repression and disguise" to "narratives of celebration and release". Late Victorians (Hardy, Conrad), sandwiched simplistically between these two

thinkers who employed such models, a certain mental elasticity was in order, and they were saved from some of the *impasses* which their more empirically oriented French and English counterparts so often faced. Thus, as Graver points out, Mill, Spencer, George Eliot, and others found themselves stuck on such questions as whether ultimately the individual or the community was more to be cherished, and whether the individual did, and should, adapt to his environment or transform it.

Eliot's fiction addresses itself to these questions, and although, as Graver demonstrates, her terminology relates more to Mill's and Spencer's and Comte's than to Tönnies's, I think she is right to suggest that in Eliot's "unsteadiness of feeling" about the relative merits of the sacred ties of the past and the scientific and social progress being made in the present, something as complex and fluid as Tönnies's social thinking is at work. Thus, for example, she offers a plausible reading of *Daniel Deronda*. Of Eliot's uneven treatment of Jewishness in the novel (now caricatured, now idealized) and her seeming abandonment of British society (or at least its defunct upper class) in favour of a dubious future society exclusively appropriate to the Jewish race,

poles, attend equally to nature and culture, and have characters who "rarely achieve identity or freedom"—a fallacious equation of identity with "freedom" which is typical of the book's lack of philosophical rigour.

Nature is assumed to be immediately accessible in subjective experience, felt "along the heart" and "on the pulses", but never infringing on or producing conscious thought. The closer we come to such "intimacy", apparently, the closer we are to being "immersed beyond self-knowing in experience", and to achieving identity and "freedom". Hardy's *Tess* offers a contradiction of the entire thesis. Sleep, in which she is both raped and arrested, "indicates the integration of *Tess* with her natural conditions". Weinstein supports this shocking suggestion by writing that *Tess* is not in fact raped; rather

Tess's self-protective, self-distinguishing consciousness does control. Her bodily conditions reassert their primacy. . . . The encounter is best seen as an event poised between human resistance and natural yielding. . . . [It] defines in *nuce* that openness to context which is *Tess's* authentic mode of response. . . .

She is one of the characters who "rarely achieve freedom". But in so far as *Tess*, sleeping, relaxes consciousness and approaches her "natural" bodily condition, the implication is that if she would "collude" by suppressing her own consciousness or desire, the event would no longer be rape but a "natural" state of affairs and the condition of her identity and "freedom".

Weinstein makes equally untenable asser-

Graver writes:

Just as the satire reveals society, both English and Jewish, to be all body and no spirit, so does it reveal the visionary world to be all spirit and no body. One is as organically incomplete as the other. The dynamic energy the reader must discover, then, involves seeing in the visionary not a complete but a corrective or admonitory image.

Mordecai's vision is, in terms of the Tönnies analysis, a model-against which to measure existing social arrangements, rather than one which ought to be achieved in fact. (Though one might still argue that Eliot feels the need to assert the possibility of such an achievement, and that she and the reader are awkwardly aware of the exclusive nature of such a solution.)

If Suzanne Graver illuminates Eliot's treatment of society in terms of the *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* opposition, she also, without being inconsistent, shows more than any previous student the closeness of George Eliot to her English contemporaries, particularly Mill (for example, the language they apply to the position of women in contemporary society is shown to be remarkably similar). That this book is finely and elegantly written is one of the many pleasures to be experienced in reading it.

tions about language. Conrad, for instance, is a writer "for whom only Polish was native, all other languages being learned". This is nonsense: language is cultural, not "native" as somehow in the blood. One problem with Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead, according to Weinstein, is that they have not discovered a mythic language of the blood:

Borrowers rather than makers of discourse, they do not generate, from their own anguish, the native phrasing that will put them in touch with their own inchoate experience. Their dependence on prefabricated formulae marks their evasion of (to paraphrase Lawrence) that which they hold unseeing in their own blood.

Here Weinstein is caught napping, complaining as he does about the invalidity of the "free", false discourse of Sue and Jude in the "alien phrasing" of Lawrence that is enthusiastically endorsed elsewhere in the book. He seems to have surrendered consciousness to completely as to be blind to what he "holds unseeing" in his own language. There is no such thing as "native phrasing", only intertextuality, but all such poststructuralist thought is dismissed here, not by argument but on the grounds of Weinstein's "deepest epistemological conviction". Can such convictions never be wrong? Or are they validated merely by being felt "on the pulses"? If so, then there is an end to the possibility of dialogue and debate; arguments based on inarticulate "feeling" are resolved only by the "intimacy" of violent bodily contact. As a corollary, this would also mean the end of criticism and of critical (if not all) consciousness.

a reliance on the stylized convention of pastoral". Scott was not quite so dull as this asserts. The realistic involvement in Jeanie's jealousy reminds us that she is now in a small world and that she knows it. The good life Jeanie wins is not free of temporal chafings like the relations between her father and her husband, and is less exciting ("I am only a minister's wife") than Effie's romantic career. The point is that, although this is notionally a comic ending, it requires discipline and commitment just as much as did the walk to London. Professor Millgate's readings are too narrow to capture the generosity of Scott's imaginative vision, so that a book which begins by claiming to do one thing ends by failing to do another.

Richard Shurey's *Walking Through Literary Landscapes* (192pp. David and Charles. £6.95. 0 7153 8486 4) traces the footsteps of writers who have drawn inspiration from the "sounds and colours of the countryside". The author conveys the atmosphere of Thomas Hardy's Dorset, D. H. Lawrence's East Midlands, Sir Walter Scott's Lowlands and George Eliot's North Warwickshire "which other places in Britain

Wit, logic and the copy-test

Robin Robbins

JOHN DONNE
Blathanatos
Edited by Ernest W. Sullivan II
280pp. Associated University Presses. £26.95.
087413 1758

All sexagenarians, Donne tells us, were, by the laws of wise states, precipitated from a bridge; among the Ceans, unprofitable men poisoned themselves, while in More's Utopia the priests exhorted men afflicted with miserable diseases to kill themselves. A further Utopian economy (let us hope the DHSS is not listening) was that those who killed themselves without giving an account of their reasons were cast out unburied. Paradoxically, the Church, which in Donne's own time supported the state's outlawing of suicide and euthanasia, in an earlier age had jumped at such opportunities to enact its devaluation of life: "God forbid any should be so malignant, so to misinterpret me, as though I thought not the blood of Martyrs to be the seed of the Church". Donne protests cautiously, but "that age was grown so hungry and ravenous of it, that many were baptized only because they would be burned, and children taught to vex and provoke executioners, that they might be thrown into the fire."

That was the sort of paradox that attracted Donne: suicide's changeable status as an extreme unorthodoxy, a case of conscience *par excellence*, lured his fermenting mind into the thickets of theology. It used to be romantically assumed that he chose the subject because of a real-life preoccupation, like Robert Burton writing of melancholy, "by being busy, to avoid melancholy", but, as Ernest Sullivan says in his introduction, "*Blathanatos* displays far more wit and logic than it does melancholy". It is a theological, not a personal or psychological treatise, just as even the love-poetry between 1607 and 1614, we were reminded by Helen Gardner, "is the poetry of a man whose mind is soaked in theological conceptions". *Blathanatos* is no more necessarily attributable to an impulse to suicide than it is likely to explain or alleviate it: the game's the thing.

Parallel-hunters have already noted that gold to airy thinness beat is as good coin in casuistical prose as in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", and may further find the seed-doctrine of "Love's Growth" and "Love's Infiniteness" in the translation of Serarius's claim that "One may love God with all his heart, and yet he may grow in that love, and love God more with all his heart". But the principal wider value of *Blathanatos* is historical, as the first (highly qualified) defence of suicide in English, and the particular value of this edition lies in its pioneering attempt to present a definitive text. It is thus by the minutiae of textual editing that it must be judged.

The posthumous first printed edition (Q) of 1646 or 1647 (probably the latter) suffered at the hands of a compositor (A) who played fast and loose with his copy in the manner of Compositor B of the Shakespeare First Folio. A's likely liberties with the text of *Blathanatos* are betrayed in a unique surviving setting by him of sheet S in a Library of Congress exemplum. In all other known exempla this sheet alone of the volume appears in a setting by a more faithful though less intelligent compositor (his work being belatedly redone by A) whose agreements nevertheless with the Bodleian manuscript (M) against A show that printer's copy (assumed to have been Donne's holograph) was closer to M than A's setting of Q elsewhere suggests. The only two succeeding editions, a 1700 reprint of Q, and a 1930 (doctored) facsimile, are textually worthless, so Sullivan is clearly right to take M as his copy-text, adding a dozen lines and twenty-one notes from Q. Though substantially the work of an amanuensis, it was corrected and annotated by Donne for presentation to Edward Herbert. For the present edition M has been transcribed in principle almost diplomatically, and in practice, with collation with M itself has shown, accurately.

Too exactly, indeed, in places: where in the preface the scribe wrote "porposition", "be- position", "beightly", "aply that", Sullivan transcribes without correction, and omits from his textual notes any mention of Q's readings. These are obviously correct in the first two

words; in the third case an editor with a fuller sense of his duties might justifiably have argued that Donne intended "apply to them that", and have supplied the "to" possibly missing also from the presumed copy for both M and Q, Donne's holograph. Furthermore, the editor must be suspected of a command of elementary Latin inadequate for working in this field when he uncritically reproduces M's "propiores" on p. 48, and wrongly attributes this obvious error to Q and its reprint also, whereas in fact, with no more than a schoolboy's knowledge, they were able to correct to "propiores". Worse still is to attribute to Donne on p. 51 the capacity for writing "porphius" for "Porphyrus"—a name well known to him as to us—when he (this is a side-note in his own hand in M) has merely omitted to dot the *i*. That he wrote *ri* not *rii* is obvious from comparison with "Panegyri" further down the same margin in *M*. (Nor are we told that that misleading *i* was in fact dotted in another ink.)

Disputable too are decisions to capitalize or not to capitalize such letters as *c*, *e*, *i*, *v*, and *w*, for which the scribe's practice is admittedly not always unambiguous. Inevitably, but creditably rarely, there are misprints, such as "Cuill" for "Ciull" on p. 40, and "Original" for "Original" on p. 121 (a glance at *M* itself proves that Sullivan is not here slavishly copying its errors). M's, square brackets enclosing quotations are replaced by italics without supply of the extra terminal punctuation that is sometimes needed, making the text no easier for the modern reader.

Donne's highly abbreviated notes of sources are of little more than antiquarian interest, especially as Sullivan reproduces their errors without correction on the page. For fuller citations we have to make a second shift to the "Explanatory Notes". They are so titled with as much fitness as modesty, since they do not constitute a full commentary: we are left to assume that Donne read serially through his hundreds of sources (including Thomas Aquinas), whereas he probably used a few compendious digests and indexes, merely checking references where possible—as he himself implicitly acknowledges after his initial list of authorities.

Moreover, even as mere expansions of Donne's references, a small sample of these explanatory notes proved unacceptably inaccurate. On p. 47 Donne cites Windeck's *De Theologia Iureconsultorum* by its (different)

running-title: Sullivan runs the first (verso) half of this running-title together with the actual head-title of the second book (which begins on a verso) to produce the chimera "Canonum ac Legum de Theologia Iureconsultorum . . ."—also exemplifying here the student error of preserving upper-case *V* when reducing to lower-case *v*. But worse, especially for a specialist bibliographer, Sullivan misreads the signature *e3* as *c3*; it would in any case be more helpful to every sort of reader to give the page number, 38 of the second sequence (ii.38). Likewise the explanatory note expanding Donne's reference to Windeck on p. 119 again misreads the signature, getting the page wrong too: "*c2*" should be "*e2*" (ie ii.36). In the case of another volume checked, Donne's own copy of Beza, *De Polygamia*, Sullivan's "p 6" on p. 234 implies that Donne's "fo.7" on p. 133 was wrong, whereas "6f." would be accurate, and Donne was substantially correct because the bulk of what he paraphrases is on p. 7.

Over 200 of Donne's own volumes have now been located, and some are marked by him: the commentary of a learned edition is where one expects to find note taken of the relationship of any such marking or annotation to the use he made of texts. For instance, there is a pencil-mark (probably invisible on microfilm) oppo-



"An Unknown Lady" by Nicholas Hilliard, c. 1595, reproduced from Robert Boyle-Powell's Catalogue of Portrait Miniatures in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (231pp. Cambridge University Press. £45. 0 521 26777 3).

Shaped by scripture

John Scattergood

JANE M. MUELLER
The Native Tongue and the Word: Developments in English prose style 1380-1580
429pp. University of Chicago Press. £25.30.
0226 545628

This is a long, heavily documented and broad-ranging book which proposes nothing less than a redefinition of the terms in which arguments about the development of modern prose style can be made.

Jane M. Mueller takes issue with R. P. Jones and his followers who argue that the main determinants of modern prose emerged from the rationalistic and scientific concerns of those who supported the enterprises of the Royal Society in the late seventeenth century. She also opposes the views of Morris Croll and his followers who maintain that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries authors defined their positions by way of imitating classical models: there were those who favoured an exciting but florid Ciceronianism, and conversely those who devised a more restrained mode based on Seneca and Tacitus. She, on the other hand, identifies the formative period for the development of modern prose style as 1380-1580 and sees the main model which influenced it as being "scripturalism"—the compositional mode of versions of the Bible in English.

Her arguments are complex and difficult to summarize briefly, but three factors emerge as particularly important. About the first, that around 1380 there is evident a new spirit of confidence in the possibilities of the use of

English as a written medium, there can be little dispute: there is an upsurge in the use of English in official areas, and wills and personal letters in English begin to proliferate (though, oddly, Mueller makes little use of this body of evidence). More contentious, but probably correct, is her view that on the linguistic plane certain syntactic features become normative—the stabilizing of word order in clauses to a pattern of Noun Phrase + Verb (+ Noun Phrase) (+ Adverb) (+ Complement) within the sentence and on a wide range of conjunctions, and creative asymmetric recursion as a means of developing sentences. In other words, she seeks to establish the so-called "trailing" style based on parataxis as the dominant English mode. But it is more difficult for her to demonstrate the pervasiveness of "scripturalism" as a literary influence before Tyndale. One problem is that possession of the Wycliffite Bible was forbidden after 1407 (without a bishop's prior permission)—though since it survives in some 240 manuscript versions the proscription appears to have been less than completely effective. But Mueller makes much use of the standard Lollard Sermon Cycle (which she irritatingly ascribes, on shaky evidence, to Wycliff) and of others like Nicholas Love who were clearly influenced by the Bible.

That there were authors who wrote in the way Mueller describes is clear; but the larger question is whether that way of writing was the dominant mode. Certainly, what she maintains applies to prose dealing with religious, moral and political issues: better than it does to, say, prose romance, which Larry Benson has described as "the most vigorous, and creative literary movement in fifteenth-century

Europe". In this genre French prose was still a major influence on English style. Nor does she sufficiently take into account that there were various styles available from which a writer could choose: when Malory, for example, is using alliterative verse as his source he writes an alliterative prose which is different from his usual mode.

However, whether one accepts the central thesis or not, there are many good things in *The Native Tongue and the Word*. Everywhere there is evidence of Mueller's sensitivity to the nuances of syntax communicated by way of a powerfully analytic, linguistically sophisticated methodology. There are persuasive and enlightening sections of Crammer, Wilson and Ascham, and a fine comparison between the prose of Tyndale and that of More, much to the former's advantage. There is a convincing section in which she maintains that hypotaxis and aureation are often the manifestations of a wish to be authoritative.

There are also things wrong with the book. Generally, not enough emphasis is given to vocabulary, particularly loan-words, which were the aspect of the language most discussed by the authors of this period. More specifically, there are some odd judgments. She finds an uneasiness in Skelton's use of the authoritative aureate mode in the prose of the *Replayntion*, because he uses "derivative jingles and mocking echoes". She appears to miss the point that he is trying to be funny at the expense of the victims of his satire. In the hypotactic, heavily aureated prose of his *Diadromus Siculus*, a serious translation, there is no sense of strain. Nevertheless, this is a book to be reckoned with, and anyone wishing to come to terms with the development of early modern English prose will have to give careful attention to it.

Writer's blinkers

Lachlan Mackinnon

JANE MILLGATE
Walter Scott: The making of the novelist
223pp. Edinburgh University Press. £17.50.
0 83224 498 3

Jane Millgate speaks in her preface of adopting "an approach that lays emphasis on the career of the Author of *Waverley*", and says that she is concerned to treat "the creation of an authorial persona . . . and the development of a corporate entity, the *Waverley* Novels". Her subtitle, "The making of the novelist", is slightly misleading, then, for far from offering an account of the forces that turned Scott's mind from verse to prose, this book sees Scott as being made a novelist by writing novels. The Author of *Waverley* is a creation of the books.

This approach to continuities in Scott's fiction is potentially very interesting. Professor Millgate begins by looking at authorial self-presentation in Scott's work as editor and poet, emphasizing the ways in which Scott is concerned to tie his material to reality, so that in his various versions of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* he achieves in many cases "an

interwoven narrative thread running from the historical account in the headline through the text of the ballad itself and on into the minor expansion and commentary in the supplementary notes".

Writing about the poetry, the author does much to revivify the texts. However, at the moment when her chosen field offers most, her study changes direction. Dealing with the novels up to *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Millgate spends most of her time in close reading of the fictions themselves, and the devices of authorial control and relation to the *Waverley* audience receive much less coverage than we have been led to expect. She seems to tie early of her method of analysis: writing about *Waverley*, she says that "the demand for complex vision expressed through the insistence on alternating and changing perspectives falls on the reader as well as on the protagonist, and is most easily formulated in the currently somewhat overworked critical metaphors of reading and deciphering".

Soon after this disheartening passage, Millgate tells us that Colonel Talbot stands "firmly for realism" and speaks of his "refusal to see any good" in what the Mac-Ivors represent. His error is a "restriction of vision". This

schematic patterning of the text does Scott and his character an injustice, for when Waverley hopes that Fergus may not be executed Talbot speaks not of realism but of "justice". He declares of Fergus that "that he was brave, generous, and possessed many good qualities, often rendered him the more dangerous . . . that he was an enthusiast in a wrong cause, only made him the more fit to be its martyr", and says that he has a "heart distressed for him as an individual". Talbot stands here for the inexorable ability of tragedy: "martyr" confers on Fergus a final dignity his Gallicized deviousness has often seemed to detract from, and legitimizes our share in Edward's grief while confirming our sense that Fergus's admirable qualities have been put to ultimately bad ends. The Colonel widens our response.

Millgate's view of Scott as a critic of romance leads to too much oversimplification. She mentions in passing Jeanie Deans's momentary jealousy at Effie's worldly good fortune as a "realistic touch" which shows Scott's "continuing engagement with his character", but sees the Knockairlie episode as an "implausible Arcadia" liberated from history. *The Heart of Midlothian* is a fiction, but it is the most authentic of Scott's fiction. To

Challenges of change

Tim Halliday

PAUL S. MARTIN and RICHARD G. KLEIN
(Editors)
Quaternary Extinctions: A prehistoric revolution
892pp. The University of Arizona Press. \$65.
01816508127

Extinction is as much an integral part of evolution as the origin of new species. Consequently, the species that exist today represent only a minuscule fraction of all those that have lived on the earth since the origin of life. It is a curious feature of evolutionary biology, therefore, that the extinction of a particular species has generally been seen as an event that requires an explanation in terms of specific antecedent causes, whereas the appearance of new species is assumed to be a continual and almost inevitable process. *Quaternary Extinctions* is a large and scholarly text which looks in great detail at a particular episode of extinction that occurred towards the end of the last ice age and examines a number of theories that have been proposed to account for the disappearance of a large part of the world's fauna over a relatively short period of time.

Before the ice ages, Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australia were populated by a rich variety of mammals and birds, many of them of enormous size. These included mammoths, mastodons, giant sloths, lions and sabre-toothed tigers. Only Africa still retains a variety of large mammals comparable with that which was once common throughout the world. Whatever catastrophe befell these animals in the late Pleistocene, its dramatic effect on the world's ecology rivals the mass extinction that, much earlier in the earth's history, saw the demise of the dinosaurs.

The fossils that were left by the Pleistocene mass extinction played a profound part in the revolution that occurred in our view of nature in the nineteenth century. The discovery of bones of gigantic animals that clearly were no longer alive posed a major and traumatic challenge to the biblical account of the Creation and paved the way for the realization that the human species is a product of an evolutionary process, not of an act of divine invention.

Three theories have been proposed to account for the Pleistocene extinctions, all of which are thoroughly examined and evaluated

in this book. The first is that prehistoric people indulged in an orgy of slaughter, or "overkill", killing animals in numbers that far exceeded their requirements for food. Alternatively, some sudden change in the earth's climate may have produced hostile conditions in which the animals could no longer survive. Finally, some authors argue that the Pleistocene mass extinction should be seen, not as an abnormal cataclysmic event, but as part of the continual evolutionary turnover by which new species replace existing ones. Most of the contributions to this book deal with fossil finds from particular locations and interpret them in terms of one of these theories. It is clear that particular theories are better supported in some parts of the world than in others. For example, the extinction of giant kangaroos in Australia seems to have had very little to do with human activity, but was associated with an increase in aridity. By contrast, there is abundant evidence that the Moas, giant flightless birds of New Zealand, were hunted to extinction by Polynesian colonists.

Two popular misconceptions of the late Pleistocene mass extinction are that it involved only very large mammals and birds and that it left the world's fauna depleted. Many studies of the fossil record of the period show clearly that numerous small species also became extinct and that extinctions were matched, or more than matched, by the appearance of new species. The last ten million years of the earth's history have undoubtedly been a period of dramatic climatic change, largely associated with a series of ice ages that were correlated in time with several extinction episodes. Environmental changes not only impose severe selective pressure on existing species but also generate favourable conditions for the origin and spread of new species that compete with the old. Every form of life is affected; the late Pleistocene was a time of great change in the kinds of plants that grew on the earth and this posed a major challenge to the herbivorous animals that had become adapted to feed on particular kinds of plant. One theory is that the herbivores, well adapted to one set of chemical plant defences, were unable to adapt to the changing flora, and were poisoned by the protective alkaloids contained in new plant species.

A feature of the palaeontology of this period of the earth's history is the unusual nature of many of the sites where fossils have been

found. In South Dakota, the remains of some thirty mammoths have been found in what was once a hot spring. It seems that a herd of mammoths treated themselves to a warm mud wallow, but found that they could not scale the steep sides of the pool, and were drowned. A deep, bottle-shaped cave in northern Wyoming was a natural trap into which a variety of animals simply fell. Another cave in the Grand Canyon contains the skeleton of a giant sloth preserved in a huge dung heap that provides a record of the changing plant diet of the herbivores that used the cave over a long period.

This book is an admirable way in which to conduct a scientific debate. Although certain of the authors hold strong but divergent views, there is no trace of the acrimony or abuse that have been features of many other controversies. A strong possibility is that all the theories are correct; a combination of climatic

change and human exploitation could have accelerated the rate at which new species replaced the old. The relative impact of these influences is likely to have varied from one locality to another, so that different investigations come to different conclusions. A feature of palaeontology that sets it apart from most other areas of science is that hypotheses cannot be tested by experiment. As a result, controversies about fossils tend to be prolonged, often bitter, and unresolved. They need not be sterile, however, and can provide the inspiration for palaeontologists to go out and seek fresh evidence, of the kind examined in this book. From such finds, we are slowly building up a picture of the world as it was in the early days of human existence, a world populated by a rich variety of wonderful creatures which, such is the tenuous nature of all species, will never exist again.

Episodic extinctions

Marjorie Sweeting

W.A. BERGGREN and JOHN A. VAN COUVERING (Editors)
Catastrophes and Earth History: The new uniformitarianism
464pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£70.42 (paperback, £16.25).
0691083282

Most geologists are too involved in their own studies to give much thought to the history and philosophy of their subject; they have "got into a state of semantic confusion", which this collection of essays attempts to clarify. Explanations of the earth's history can only be plausible, and as a result we tend to adhere to the world we know as an explanation of past worlds. The terms uniformitarianism and catastrophism are also used in opposition – uniformitarianism assumes that the balance between natural forces results in continuous change, catastrophism that there are interruptions in the historical succession. Neither of these views is exclusively correct. Nineteenth-century geologists, including Lyell himself, already realized that the earth had differed in the past and recognized, for instance, the evidence indicating the former existence of the Pleistocene ice-caps.

Lyell's ideas of uniformitarianism were developed in a framework of erroneous tectonic theory and based on an inference about the stability of the oceans and sea-bed which we now know not to be true. The earth's rock and fossil record contains only certain of the episodes of their history. As Derek Ager points out, there are the rocks which remain and there is time which has passed and can never be recovered; we therefore need time-terms and rock-terms and nothing more. Stephen Jay Gould maintains that the dogma of gradualism had a negative impact on geology. It is true that geologists have sometimes been the most conservative of all natural scientists, but this is not entirely the explanation. As A. Hallam has already shown in *A Revolution in the Earth Sciences: From continental drift to plate tectonics*, it was not only geologists who hindered the development, in the early twentieth century, of ideas on the mobility of the continents, but classical physicists, who, because they could not at the time explain the mechanism of continental movement, were prepared to say that it could not have occurred. Such opposition forced many geologists to seek alternative (and unprofitable) explanations for their evidence. It wasn't until the work of enlightened physicists in the 1940s and 1950s and new methods of oceanic exploration that the theory of plate tectonics, which has revolutionized geology, was born.

The earth's history can be divided into phases of continental aggregation (or "pangeal" phases) and dispersal, caused by plate activity. A. G. Fischer recognizes two great tectonic cycles of about 300 million years, caused by two cycles in mantle convection. Phases of continental aggregation and crustal thickening are associated with low sea-levels and ice-ages (the ice-house state); continental dispersal and crustal spreading with high sea-levels, volcanic and climatic events. The new

states can be recognized at different times in the geological column. The effects of long-term sea-level (eustatic) changes are of particular importance since these control the amount of land exposed to vegetation and weathering and the depth of groundwater. We now know much more about fluctuations in climate, and historical records illustrate the extent of climatic changes in the past 250 years. Scientists are therefore much more willing to accept abrupt climatic episodes than a hundred years ago.

Darwin was the originator of organic gradualism by which species "fade into one another with limits as indefinable as those of distinct yet separate colours of the solar spectrum". But the organic record in geology is anything but gradual and is full of episodic extinctions of species. The fossil record does not record many kinds of fossils evolving side by side, but a whole series of little catastrophes followed by bigger catastrophes. This record Ager prefers to call catastrophic uniformitarianism.

One of the greatest events in geological history is the so-called mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous period. About 70 million years ago, many formerly successful species died out – these included many reptiles (notably the dinosaurs), large benthic foraminifera, ammonites and rudist and inoceram bivalves. It has been claimed that these extinctions could only have occurred as a result of an extra-terrestrial event. A large part of this book is devoted to examining the faunal and floral changes that took place at the end of the Cretaceous period. The consensus is that changes on the earth did change at the Cretaceous/Tertiary boundary, but that the extinction pattern was gradual and not catastrophic. As a result of plate activity, there was a considerable lowering of sea-level and climatic cooling, sufficient to kill off many of the animals living in tropical shelf seas; it can also be shown that many species – particularly rudist and ammonites – were by the end of the Cretaceous period in a state of evolutionary decline. Kauffmann stresses that there is no evidence to suggest a meteor impact or that the earth had passed through the tail of a comet. He concludes that if an extra-terrestrial event did occur, then it only enhanced the natural eventual decline of the species and pushed them to an exceptional end. Even with respect to the dinosaurs, Archibald and Clemens say that "there is not sufficient data to demonstrate that dinosaur extinction was a globally synchronous event". All these views illustrate the ideas of the new uniformitarianism.

The only author in the book who is prepared to consider extra-terrestrial causes for these extinctions is Dale A. Russell who writes particularly on the disappearance of the dinosaurs. His thesis is that the large marine reptiles and dinosaurs show no evidence of a general decline prior to their extinction; he bravely concludes that "it does not seem possible" to present to eliminate extra-terrestrial models for their apparently rapid demise.

Thus gradualism has been replaced by concepts of punctuated change in all aspects of geology. The essays in *Catastrophes and Earth History* are forceful and well documented, but have a slightly self-satisfied air. Geologists

The going rate for a title

John Byrne

JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Modern First Editions: Their value to collectors
317pp. Orbis. £15.
0856136573

Books which attempt to ascribe "values" to second-hand things, let alone to "collectables", are doomed, before they leave the press, to semi-obsolescence: so fast and furious are the tides of these regions. The collecting of first editions of modern literature (wherever that may start) is no exception to the rule. Yet for the second time in seven years, Joseph Connolly has plunged into this perilous sea. In 1977 we had his *Collecting Modern First Editions*, some introductory notes followed by "selective" checklists of the works of 267 writers. For *Modern First Editions: Their value to collectors*, sixty-seven authors have been dropped and forty-three added. The new book is much more clearly laid out than its predecessor and is generously illustrated with photographs of dust-wrappers (very important nowadays, since the wrapper is frequently of far greater rarity than the book). The text is written with verve and good humour, and Connolly wears his private enthusiasms on his sleeve. He is fond of genre fiction, very fond of Kingsley Amis – annotating his checklist so that it stretches beyond five pages – and madly denigrating of films, adding irrelevant lists of screen versions of novels wherever possible. He has not much time for poets or for Americans or for the Irish.

To select the Sitwells down to six titles each and the Powys brothers to eleven between them is harsh: to reduce Wyndham Lewis to one book is *selectio ad absurdum*. The dropping of Shaw and Wells on the grounds that they are no longer "modern" is arguable (Corvo and the Grossmith brothers are retained); equally arguable is the inclusion of some writers who are not collected at all but who Connolly feels ought to be. One cannot, however, help raising an eyebrow at the total exclusion of such keenly sought after writers as Aldington, Ambler, Ashbery, Bates, Belloc, Berners, Blunden, Jocelyn Brooke, Robert Byron, Roy Campbell, Cary, Compton-Burnett, Conrad, Coppard, Nigel Dennis, Derleth, Ford Madox Ford, David Garnett, Gascoyne, Gordimer, Hanley, Geoffrey Hill, Kitchen, Alan Lewis, MacDiarmid, Mansfield, Maugham, Merrill, Mervin, Muir, O'Faolain, O'Flaherty, Olson, Plomer, Sackville-West, Christina Stead, Stein, Theroux, Wain, Warner, Watkins, Welch, Wilbur, Charles and W. C. Williams, Williamson and Andrew Young – to name but forty-seven.

For every book that he does list, the author provides a "value", which he defines as "the price a collector might have to pay for a good copy, in the dust-wrapper, unless otherwise stated". These figures are denoted by a rather irritating alphabetical key (A equals up to £5, Z equals up to £10,000), so that it is possible that some of the more grotesque blunders are misprints. I fear they are not. Connolly knows perfectly well that the "value" of a first edition is what someone is willing to give for it: he also knows that the calculation of this sum will owe a lot to precedent. Unfortunately he appears not to have consulted other booksellers' catalogues or auction records. He has fallen back upon the authority of his own previous work. If he was wrong then, which he frequently was, the present book is marred by a factor of inflationary error.

In a quasi-modest disclaimer it is ceded that "central London dealers . . . might find some of the valuations in this book on the low side". They do not: they find them crass. *Darkness at Noon* is one of the most elusive of all modern first editions (one suspects that many copies were destroyed in the blitz). When the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin mounted an exhibition based on Cyril Connolly's *The Modern Movement*, that book of Koestler's was the only one of a hundred titles of which they could not display a true first. Yet this Connolly states that a collector might have to pay £50 for it. I

hope he will find one for me at the price. From hundreds of other examples I would also select from his shelves Henry Green's *Blindness* at £80 (a copy changed hands for \$4,500 some two years ago); Dylan Thomas's *Twenty-Six Poems*, one of ten copies on japon, at £250 (even the 140 copies on handmade paper command £1,000 or so each nowadays); Lowell's *Land of Unlikeness* at £100; Lowry's *Ultramarine* at £200; Pound's *A Lume Spento* at £4,000; Jean Rhys's *The Left Bank* at £125. While enjoying a lengthy sojourn in the West Indies on my profits, I would offer in part-exchange multiple copies of Mervyn Peake's *Twelve Poems* and of Iris Murdoch's memorial address for Reynolds Stone – worth, according to Connolly, £50 and £30 respectively, but actually in print at £12.50 and £7.50.

The avowed purpose of this book is "to both reflect and stimulate the interests of the young collector today" (an artfully Amisian split infinitive); it does not reflect them, and may easily dismay the young collector when out in the real world.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 215

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send the answers so that they reach this office not later than March 22. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author 215" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on March 29.

1 "The finest, purest sea breeze on the coast – acknowledged to be so – excellent bathing – fine hard sand – deep water ten yards from the shore – no mud – no weeds – no slimy rocks – Never was there a place more palpably designed by nature for the resort of the invalid – the very spot which thousands seemed in need of."

2 Enough of tragedy! Let wail of gulls,
The sunbats in the breakers and the breeze
Which blows the sand into the sandwiches,
Let castles crumbling in the rise of tide,
Let cool dank caves and dark interstices
Where, underneath the squelching bladder-

Lark stinging fin and sharp, marauding claw
Ready to pierce the rope-soled bathing-shoe,
Let darting prawn and helpless jelly-fish
Spell joy or misery to youth.

3 The little bay lay like an oblong swimming-bath five hundred feet below them. The surface of the water was like glass; the strand, with its phalanx of boats drawn up in Sabbath tidiness, glittered like marble in the living light, and over this marble black dots moved slowly to and fro; with a curling wisp of smoke . . . the sea, a pale gray, encompassed all; the southern sky had a faint sapphire tinge, rising to delicate azure. The sight of this haven at rest, shut in by the restful sea and by the great moveless hill, a calm within a calm, aroused profound emotion.

Competition No 211

Winner: W. H. Milner

Answers:

1 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales oppress,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou: glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

Robert Bridges, "A Passer-by"

2 I sing of the keen destroyer
Banging on the silken doors of the morning,
Cutting through the panels of the South Atlantic:
Strands of light streaming in the steel rigging.
Charles Causley, "HMS Eclipse approaches Freetown"

3 Bright breast-cares have I abided,
Known on my keel many a care's hold,
And dire sea-surge, and there I oft spent
Narrow nightwatcher night the ship's head
While she tossed close to cliffs,
Ezra Pound, "Seafarer"

The Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University, New York, has published a well-printed and plentifully illustrated volume on its *Collections and Treasures* (138pp. Columbia University Libraries. \$25. 096078621 X). A long introduction by Kenneth A. Lohf describes the development of the collection, particularly over the last fifty years, and descriptive paragraphs by the library's curators deal with an immense range of mater-

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The Primary Source: Tropical forests and our future by Norman Myers, which was reviewed in the TLS, January 18, is published by Norton in the UK also, at £13.50.

ial from a Mesopotamian cylinder seal four thousand years old to literary manuscripts by Herman Wouk and Allen Ginsberg. 121 items, all of the highest quality, are described, including medieval and Renaissance manuscripts as well as recent publishing and printing archives; this descriptive catalogue, partly commemorating the housing of the collections in handsome new premises, will be full of surprises to a wide range of scholars. G.N.

Conflicts concealed

Wilma George

J. TAYLOR
Themes in Biogeography
404pp. Croom Helm. £25.00 (paperback, £12.95).
0709924275

Themes in Biogeography is a brave attempt to introduce biologists and geographers to one another. In biogeography, biologists and geographers seem to work at opposite ends of a continuum, but a collection of articles of which the majority are written by geographers is bound to present a one-eyed view. Of ten contributors, there is only one zoologist – there is no palaeontologist to extend the time-scale, further back than the Quaternary – and the other nine, including the botanists, are all associated with geography departments.

For geographers, biogeography is about biomes and community structure and climax theory. For biologists, it is mapping the distribution of plants and animals in space and time and interpreting the patterns. *Themes in Biogeography* fails in its expressed aim to bring these two views together.

At one end of the continuum, there is one article on the history of the subject, one on spatial dimension, one on time-scales and one on the distribution of animal communities. But no author takes up the challenge of the apparent anomalies between plant and animal distributions, the problems of convergent evolution and extinctions, the modern attempts at floral and faunal pattern analysis. The conflicts between vicariance, in which an ancestral population is dissected by a physical barrier,

draw into small favourable habitats when climatic conditions are adverse to expand again if conditions improve, are reviewed in inadequately few words. Even less is said about the relevance to biogeography of the cladistic theory that speciation can only occur by divergence, or of the punctuated equilibrium theory, which maintains that species arise suddenly and without the aid of natural selection. There is no suggestion that arguments are raging over whether biogeography is about only modern patterns of distribution or whether it also includes Wallacean historical biogeography. At the other end of the continuum, the articles are on comparative theories of ecosystems, on vegetation analysis, on soils in ecosystems, on bioclimates, on "man/land" paradox, on remote sensing and on "heritage and challenge". But no author examines the borderline where allopatric and sympatric speciation bump into vicariance and dispersal; and animals are not tied into ecosystems or vegetation surveys.

Themes in Biogeography is geared to the interests of geography students. Authoritative and readable; it describes the geographer's view of biogeography. But the geography student will remain unaware that pests and parasites and choosy herbivores can materially affect plant cover. He will not learn that man's distribution of cows can require a similar distribution of dung beetles. Ironically, the biology student has more to gain. He can learn about ingenious methods of vegetation classification. He can learn how to identify copper-bearing rocks from the distribution of everlasting flowers picked out by aerial photography. And he can learn about changes brought about in natural ecosystems by the activities of man during the past few thousand